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TRIUMPHS OF DETECTION

CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR BERRETT
(Who investigated the murder of P.C. Gutteridge.)

TRIUMPHS OF DETECTION

A BOOK ABOUT DETECTIVES

BY

GEORGE DILNOT

AUTHOR OF "SCOTLAND YARD," ETC.

London

Geoffrey Bles

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TO

H. N. "BILLY" HUGHES

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THE OLD BOW STREET OFFICE.

TRIUMPHS OF DETECTION

CHAPTER I

MR. BUCKET AND OTHERS

To draw comparisons between detectives and detective systems of various countries it is first of all necessary to have a definition of a detective. Here is an initial difficulty. Is he—to apply the method of Mr. Chadband—a pathologist, an analyst, a chemist, a microscopist? Is he an administrator? Is he a scientific expert on finger-prints, on *modus operandi*, on filing systems? All these are essential parts of detective machinery through the civilised world. All of them have done notable things in aid of justice. Yet I do not know that they can be called detectives.

For myself, I am in favour of Mr. Bucket. Do you remember Mr. Bucket?

> Mr. Bucket and his fat forefinger are much in consultation together under existing circumstances. When Mr. Bucket has a matter of this pressing interest under his consideration, the fat forefinger seems to rise to the dignity of a familiar demon. He puts it to his ears and it whispers information; he puts it to his lips and it enjoins him to secrecy; he rubs it over his nose and it sharpens his scent; he shakes it before a guilty man and it charms him to his destruction. The Augurs of the Detective Temple invariably predict that, when Mr. Bucket and that finger are much in conference, a terrible avenger will be heard of ere long.
>
> Otherwise mildly studious in his observation of

> human nature, on the whole a benignant philosopher not disposed to be severe on the follies of mankind, Mr. Bucket pervades a vast number of houses, and strolls about an infinity of streets: to outward appearances rather languishing for want of an object. He is in the friendliest condition towards his species and will drink with most of them. He is free with his money, affable in his manners, innocent in his conversation—but through the placid stream of his life there glides an undercurrent of forefinger.
>
> Time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket. Like man in the abstract he is here to-day and gone to-morrow—but, very unlike man, indeed, he is here again the next day.

Mr. Bucket, a little more polished, a little more helped by finger-prints and motor-cars, a little more backed by organisation, is still the backbone of Scotland Yard. He is the spearhead of detection. The specialists are his allies—and he would be the last to minimise their services—but without them he would still be catching thieves. It is a point worth considering that no mechanical or scientific devices can ever supersede the wit and experience of the man who comes into contact with the raw, real thing.

Perhaps that is the secret of the high place taken by Scotland Yard among the detective bureaux of the world. Practically all those who have examined the subject agree that theoretically Vienna has carried detective science to its most perfect point; yet London, so far as comparisons can be made, has the greater number of detective successes.

Mr. Bucket is peculiarly British. If one examines the organisation of some Continental police forces, one begins to appreciate why he so rarely appears there.

The London Criminal Investigation Department man is selected from the ablest of a uniformed force of 20,000, after severe examinations of his academic and technical fitness. From the moment he passes through the detective school at Scotland Yard his resource and initiative are developed and encouraged. He knows that he may attain to the highest ranks in the service, and ambition and *esprit de corps* are factors in his career. He is taught the team spirit, and yet again and again he finds himself in situations where he must act alone.

There are young sergeants at some of the outlying stations of London who are expected to handle practically all the criminal investigations of a district. They are not encouraged to worry their chiefs for aid except in matters of great moment. Thus they learn self-reliance and discretion. No one will interfere with them so long as their duties are adequately performed. They alone get the credit or discredit. The same is true of many provincial police forces.

Now consider the detective system of France, so often vaunted for its superiority. In the first place, the French detective is not drawn from the uniformed force. A uniformed officer has no more right than any ordinary citizen to become a candidate; and, in fact, few of the French detectives have ever worn other than the army uniform. The uniformed force and the detective force are entirely distinct, although in Paris they both come under the Prefect of Police. Our detectives are big men; the Parisian officers are generally small men, who average under five feet seven inches in height. The idea is that a small man is less conspicuous.

The French detective system suffers from complication and over-organisation. About the Sûreté Générale itself there are many misconceptions. The Sûreté Générale is a department of the Ministry of the Interior, which roughly corresponds to that department of our own Home Office which deals with police affairs.

In Paris there is a Service de la Sûreté, controlled by a director under the Prefect of Police, to which detective candidates are attached after a simple examination. Lectures are given on phases of police work, particularly identification and law, at uncertain intervals, but what a detective knows in Paris he, in effect, has to find out for himself. Only the more intelligent men are attached to the headquarters detachment which deals with the more serious crimes—the *Brigade Criminelle*. The pay of French detectives has always compared very unfavourably with that of our own men, and there is a dead limit of promotion beyond which they cannot go.

The superior officers of the French detectives have not come up from the ranks. While in Scotland Yard every man with the exception of the Assistant-Commissioner and Deputy Assistant-Commissioner has fought his way up from the police service, in France the heads of detachments are of a special legal class and exercise semi-judicial functions. Where we use divisional inspectors in divisions of police, the French use *commissaires*. Although, theoretically, all the police forces of Paris are co-ordinated by the Prefecture, it is not to be expected that all the different bodies should act with that smoothness so noticeable at Scotland Yard, where each man is actuated by the

team spirit. The uniformed policeman has little affinity to the detective; the *commissaire* is of a class apart from his men. The *judge d'instruction,* or examining magistrate, sooner or later has a finger in an inquiry.

Outside Paris the confusion is even worse, for there may be two, three, or more investigations of the same case. Nowhere in France is there room for Mr. Bucket.

The outstanding pieces of detective work that have happened in France have, in fact, rarely been carried through by detectives as we understand the word. Rather they have been feats carried out in the laboratories by learned scientific men.

Berlin offers even less outlet than in Paris for the man who attempts to work himself up in the detective service. Indeed, he can only reach the grade of detective-sergeant, and his specialised education is that of the ordinary uniformed man. The men who handle squads of from three to seven men are *Kriminal Kommissars,* the majority of whom are University graduates in law, who have to give proof of their physical and moral qualifications, and have also to be in possession of a small private income. For eighteen months they are trained without pay, and are then examined and, if successful, appointed as vacancies occur. Each *Kommissar* handles a squad that deals with some particular crime. There are more than thirty of these, so minutely organised that there is even one which deals with thefts of meat, and another for church thefts.

For murder cases there are "murder commissions." These consist of three or four *Kommissars,* who may be assisted by their squads, a police surgeon, and a

photographer. The personnel of these commissions is changed each month.

Although there are two or three detectives in each of the police precincts of Berlin, they are under the supervision of the headquarters *Kommissars*. *Inspektors* are responsible for groups of the squads, and they in turn are under the general administration of the *Oberregierungsrat,* the Chief of the Detective Department, whose immediate superior is the Police President.

As might be expected, all mechanical aids—files, card-indexes, and registers—are maintained with German efficiency. Quite apart from the general records, such as finger-prints, photographs, newspaper cuttings, and so on, each *Kommissar* has to keep a card-index record of cases reported to him under three heads—known culprits at large, unknown culprits of whom a description has been obtained, and details of cases in which the offenders are entirely unknown. One can imagine the amplitude of records that exists at police headquarters.

This system works with stolid efficiency as a rule, but it does not make for individual pliancy or brilliancy in the detective. A point that may be fairly made in comparing British with German detectives, or, indeed, with any Continental detectives, is the extensive power enjoyed by the latter in dealing with suspects—autocratic powers that would not be tolerated for an instant in this country, but which very much simplify the amassing of evidence.

No city trains its detectives with greater thoroughness than Vienna. The rank and file are recruited from the uniformed police and take up minor detective duties

while attending a detective school an hour or two each day for several months. After several years of detective experience officers are selected for promotion to sergeant. Their educational qualifications are tested, and they then have to spend six hours a week at the headquarters school for a year. Here they are instructed in the niceties of the theory and practice of criminal investigation.

Spite of all this, these men are rarely advanced beyond the rank of sergeant. The superior officers of police are drawn from university graduates of law. It should be explained that many of the Austrian universities give instruction in scientific details of criminology

Each of the police divisions of Vienna has its own little detachment of detectives who are supposed to handle outbreaks of crime in their districts. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. The real centre of detection is a group of about a dozen departments at headquarters, each of which specialises on some sort of crime, and each of which is under a competent officer. One of these squads investigates every serious crime independently of the local detectives. This duplication occasionally leads to friction. In addition there is at the call of headquarters a group of medico-legal experts and other specialists.

In theory the United States system of police approximates to the British. In practice it is quite different. Even in those few cities where able attempts are made to grapple with the problems of crime, competent and honest men find themselves hampered by a variety of circumstances. Political "pull" and other factors are opposed to single-minded efficiency. On the other hand, it is possible, as in England, for a

detective to rise from the bottom to the top of the service by merit alone. It is also possible for a detective to rise by other qualities than merit.

There are many detective establishments other than those attached to the city police forces. The Federal Secret Service is mainly concerned with counterfeiting offences; the District Attorneys, who are local public prosecutors, have their own staff of detectives; post-office men investigate mail frauds; detectives of the Department of Justice are under the control of the Attorney-General for special purposes; prohibition agents look for violations of the liquor laws; County Sheriffs, State Constabularies, United States Marshals, all independent of each other, may have some part in the search for a criminal. And, in addition, there are many private detective agencies which intervene—often quite effectively—in criminal investigation work in a manner quite unknown in this country.

There is not always complete harmony between these various authorities and those city police forces upon whom the chief burden of the repression of crime rests.

These latter are the only organisations with which comparison can be made. Practically all of them start with one common drawback. The appointment of the chief of the police is a piece of political patronage enjoyed by an elected Mayor. He may or may not know anything of police work, but until a new election comes along he holds his post. This goes far to explain many of the "graft" scandals that have happened among the police of America.

New York City has had its troubles in this way, yet it is but fair to say that if it has suffered from rascals

it has also its traditions of honest and capable administrators and fine detectives. A curious little story is told by Mr. George S. Dougherty, a former chief of New York detectives. Not many years ago a law was passed giving the Commissioner power to promote 150 patrolmen (constables) to first-grade detectives, with an increase of about $1,000 (about £200) in salary. What happened? Says Mr. Dougherty:

> Every friend of a powerful politician in the police department who was a patrolman was promoted. In those days he did not have to do much detecting, but attended roll-call and the line-up of prisoners, listened to a few details read, and spent the afternoon on the race-tracks or at the baseball parks, and the evenings in the theatres. He was always looking for dangerous crooks, and although he never found any, was a terror to them—so he claimed. Every time he appeared in sight they hustled back to their holes and stayed there—to hear him tell of it.

Under honest administration, however, the power given to the Commissioner to promote for meritorious service, or to send an inefficient detective back to patrol a beat, helped much to improve the standard of the Detective Bureau.

To-day the detectives of New York are selected from the patrolmen and put through a very thorough training in the detective school. Some of the subjects included are psychology, pathology—and pistol practice. One peculiarity of New York, and other American detective forces, is that they include men of all nationalities—even coloured men. One of the most distinguished of its detectives was Petrosino, an Italian, who met his death while on duty.

Although New York has detachments of detectives

located in fifteen districts of the city there is a distinct tendency towards the "squad" system operated from headquarters. There is, for instance, among others, a homicide squad for the investigation of murders, a bomb squad, and a pickpocket squad. A Missing Persons Bureau in charge of a captain and twenty-seven men exists and has justified itself in many curious cases.

A commentary on one point made by a sub-committee of the Crime Commission of New York State in 1927 is worth quoting, although it might equally apply to many European forces:

> Another difficulty arising in connection with detective administration is practically universal. It consists in the continuous strife which goes on year in and year out between the uniformed force and the detective division. This ancient rivalry rests upon the artificial distinction which is usually drawn between crime repression and criminal investigation. It arises from the fact that although the patrolman is often the first to risk life and limb, he is automatically displaced upon the arrival of detectives. Too often the services rendered by the patrolman are completely lost sight of and the administrative head bestows the praise and public commendation upon the plain clothes operatives alone. This condition inspires a natural resentment which sometimes leads to a series of retaliatory acts by the two branches. In the manœuvres which follow, official duties are submerged, and the energies of the contending factions are directed at causing each other confusion, discomfort, and discouragement.

Perhaps, not always in so acute a form, this feeling is generally latent between those charged with the prevention and the detection of crime. Friction, however, is more often apparent between different groups of

investigators. This weakness is apparent in practically all systems, and, human nature being what it is, it is always liable to exist between officials of different organisations.

However marked may be the differences between the methods of detectives in different countries, they all possess certain common factors—detective training schools, identity bureaux, laboratory specialists, registration systems, and means of raising a swift hue and cry. All of these are very desirable, and, properly handled and co-ordinated, they make detection easier and conviction surer. A Mr. Bucket would still catch thieves without these methods, but these methods would be of no use without a Mr. Bucket.

Leaving aside these mechanical and scientific aids to detection, it is worth while glancing at some of the rougher spadework of detection in various countries. Take the "third degree," which is declared not to exist in America. I quote from Mr. George C. Henderson's book, "Keys to Crookdom," published in 1924, written with the advice of a score of police chiefs, whom he names, and with an introduction by the President of the International Association of Police Chiefs. Mr. Henderson, in a chapter dealing with "Police Technology," says:

> The third degree differs according to the circumstances and the person involved. A rich man, powerful man, who might make trouble, is not "sweated." A poor habitual criminal whose word is not believed is sometimes treated pretty rough. In one instance a negro, charged with attacking white girls, was knocked down repeatedly by the chief of police of a small town every time he denied the charge. Finally he confessed. Physical weaklings are kicked and cuffed,

and their wrists twisted or their fingers bent back until they "come across."

Martinez (a fictitious name) was not a coward and could not be cuffed into making a confession. So his sweating took a different form. He was seated on a bench and detectives questioned him. When one pair became tired another group of officers took their places. They kept at Martinez all night and all day until the fellow was worn out. When he dozed off they shook him roughly by the shoulder and called him names and accused him in no uncertain terms. They gave him no rest. After a time he was so exhausted that as soon as an officer released him he fell over, dead to the world. Still the torture persisted. . . .

Mr. Dougherty declares that this sort of "third degree" is a thing of yesterday. But he does give some hint of another method which no British detective dare use :

The present-day third degree is more or less a battle of wits between the inquisitor and the accused. Lasting sometimes for a long period, and frequently a test between a strong-willed, clear-headed, powerful police official and a weak-minded prisoner, it often results in the accused confessing to the crime when he did not commit it. There are innumerable cases where, under severe examination, defendants have, because of criminal vanity and inexhaustive questioning, acknowledged crimes they were not concerned in.

Sometimes the most severe and bullying methods of cross-examination are resorted to, and fail. Psychology plays a very important part in the detection of crime, the examination of suspects, and the procuring of confessions. Severe methods may get results from one individual where they will fail with another.

One of the time-honoured methods in French investigation of a crime is the "reconstitution" before

an examining magistrate. Mr. C. J. Martin, in a recent article in the *Daily Mail,* in which he pointed out the "singularly ineffective" criminal investigation system of France, said :

> Crime reconstitutions, such as the dramatic re-enacting of the murder of a pretty telephone girl by Guyot, the millionaire, stock-broker-farmer, who strangled her in his motor-car, and then dragged her body to the foot of a haystack to which he set fire, have rarely given any tangible results.
>
> All Guyot was able to do, when the police took him to the scene of the murder, was to mimic callously, and without a sign of repentance, how he killed the girl and how he drove his car halfway across the field before he lifted out the still warm body of his victim. No new evidence was adduced, because the police had traced down the crime to Guyot by ordinary methods. Guyot is now serving a life sentence in Devil's Island.

Professor Hans Gross, the eminent Austrian criminologist, whose work on criminal investigation is still a standard detective textbook throughout the world, gives an instance of the elasticity of mind of the Austrian detectives in seeking the assistance of experts. There was a banker who lived alone and who made a habit of locking the door between his own and an adjoining apartment each night. A thief, a former servant of the banker, hid in this apartment and blocked the slot into which the bolt of the lock slipped with a small piece of wood. Thus the banker believed, when he turned the key, that he had actually locked the door. This was not the case, and the thief was able to enter the bedroom during the night, take the key of a safe from a table, and so achieve a robbery of some consequence.

But the little piece of wood was left and was shown to a locksmith. He observed: "The person who made this works more minutely than we do. It was not necessary to seal the hole with so much care; quite an ordinary piece of wood would have done well enough, provided it was of the proper length." A wood-turner declared that the piece of wood was fashioned by a man who knew how to carve.

A wood-carver was next questioned, and he was able by chance to indicate an instrument used exclusively by makers of boot and shoe trees. This instrument was procured, and the investigating officer was easily convinced of the accuracy of the wood-carver's statements, and, on the result being communicated to the victim of the theft, the thief was easily found; in fact, the last servant the banker had dismissed had formerly been a tree-maker, and, indeed, went back to that trade whenever he was out of a place.

One of the things that sometimes help the Continental police is the fact that a register of signatures of practically every inhabitant and every visitor to a town is kept at police headquarters. Nothing of the sort exists in England, and when it comes to tracing a criminal by his handwriting a detective is thrown back on his own wit and ingenuity. A case of this kind occurred in a town in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The late Chief Inspector William Denny was faced with the difficulty of finding the writer of some anonymous letters. He went to the district from which they had been postmarked and posed as a commercial traveller. There he found that a petition for the reprieve of a local murderer was being organised, and he volunteered to assist in collecting signatures. For

several days he collected signatures and spent his evenings comparing them with the writing of the anonymous letters. Thus he succeeded at last in locating the person for whom he sought.

CHAPTER II

SCIENTIFIC DETECTION

THE application of science to the detection and conviction of offenders is a comparatively modern development. The specialist has become an important link in the administration of criminal justice. He is a formidable and spectacular figure in newspapers and in books. This is understandable because it is much more entertaining to learn how a criminal was identified by a single strand of hair than to hear a detective cover weeks or months of prosaic work with the phrase "From information received . . ."

There is an old golfing joke—"None of your blinking science, partner; just bung it in the hole." The underlying idea applies with equal force to most detective work. Both detectives and specialists smile when they fall across sapient paragraphs of this sort:

> In Paris there are three laboratories where detective officers are trained to search for germs and other clues which would lead to the elucidation of crime. In this country we rely upon experts from the Home Office, who not only conduct post-mortem examinations, but who test bloodstains on clothing and articles.
>
> In official quarters it is now thought the time has arrived when young detectives should be trained in scientific research in order to enable them to undertake the work themselves when actually on the scene of a crime.

The writer of this article apparently expects detectives not only to "search for germs," but to test bloodstains—a highly difficult and delicate operation

for a man who has devoted his life to such matters. Yet many of the public, and even some police administrators (in degree) have fallen for this sort of confused nonsense.

Scientific organisation—the provision of scientific appliances—is of immense importance in all detective systems; but to expect all detectives to be scientists is quite another thing. The main business of the detective is to catch criminals, and he does it because he knows criminals and their methods, not because he knows anything of chemistry or toxicology. The clever detective will seek his information from the highest authority available and make no pretence of omniscience. He sends a finger-print to the finger-print department, a bloodstain to an analyst, a bullet to a gunsmith. In the words of ex-Chief Detective-Superintendent Taylor of the Manchester City Police, "there is no limit to the extent to which experts in their respective spheres can assist the detective in his investigations, and he should never be too confident or too conservative to seek their assistance."

Police laboratories staffed by experts are now an integral part of many Continental police systems. In England there are eminent specialists retained by the Home Office who are called in by any police force as occasion requires. This answers all practical purposes. It is very much to be doubted if an official police laboratory could do more than is already done, and, indeed, the view of Scotland Yard is that it would not justify its expense. They have scientists whose skill is second to none in the world at their call when they want them. The staff of a police laboratory would, in sober truth, be idle most of its time.

The manner in which the scientist may assist the executive detective is well illustrated by a case that was dealt with by the Police Technical Laboratory at Lyons a few years back.

A number of thefts had taken place in the post office, and quiet inquiries had failed to reveal the thief. One official, however, came to the conclusion that the thefts had taken place in a retiring-room, and watch was kept on this place through a peephole in a loft above. The watch was successful to a point. A postman in uniform was seen to open some letters, but, unfortunately, it was impossible to see his face. With quick resource the detectives resolved to put some mark upon him that would enable them to identify him, and stamped upon the thin ceiling so that a quantity of plaster from the whitewashed ceiling fell upon the left shoulder and sleeve of his coat. The alarmed thief hurriedly decamped, and before he could be reached he had carefully brushed his coat so that no apparent trace was left. Dr. Locard of the Lyons Laboratory was called in and made a microscopical examination of the coats of several suspected men. This revealed on one of them, in the exact position that had been indicated, a quantity of sulphate of lime (whitewash), which, though invisible to the naked eye, the brush had failed to remove.

In another case, dust brushed from the clothes of suspected coiners was subjected to an analysis, which revealed minute particles of lead, tin, and antimony, in exactly the same proportions as that used in the false coin.

Few, if any, British experts have had greater ex-

perience in elucidating criminal problems in the laboratory than Mr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell, the Secretary of the Society of Public Analysts. One case in which he was concerned is a striking example of teamwork between detectives and experts in bring ing a scoundrel to the gallows. A Mrs. Blume died, and a carpenter named Richard Brinkley, who had lodged with her, produced a will in which she bequeathed him her house and money. The daughter and granddaughter of Mrs. Blume, entirely unsuspicious of anything but undue influence, determined to test the validity of the will, and legal steps were accordingly taken.

This was embarrassing to Brinkley, who had not anticipated that the two witnesses whose signatures were attached to the will would be called to give evidence in court. One of these, a man named Parker, totally denied that he had witnessed any will; but once, when they were together in a public-house, he had, at Brinkley's request, signed a paper which the other said was a petition for an outing. The top of the paper had been turned back so that he had not seen its contents.

If the will was to have any chance to stand, it was clear that Parker had to be kept out of the Probate Court. The resourceful Brinkley obtained some prussic acid on the plea that he needed it to kill a dog, and put the poison into a bottle of stout which he took to Parker's lodgings. Before Parker returned, however, the stout came to the notice of his landlady, Mrs. Beck. She called her husband, and they each helped themselves to a glass. They died the same night.

Parker was arrested on suspicion, but his innocence was almost immediately demonstrated, and he was set free. The detectives then gleaned enough against Brinkley to warrant his arrest. He was incautious enough to deny that he had put poison in the stout before any such accusation had been made.

The case against Brinkley was that he had intended to kill Parker and that this design had resulted in the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Beck. That was just as much murder as if he had intended to kill them. It was, however, important to establish a motive for his plot against Parker. Could the will be proved to be bogus?

Mr. Mitchell examined the will under the microscope, and also brought into use a tintometer, an instrument which up to then had never been used in a criminal case. This is a scientific device by which it is possible to match shades of colour with a precision impossible to the naked eye. By these means it was possible to prove that the body of the will, the signature of Mrs. Blume, and the signature of the two witnesses had been written in three separate kinds of ink. The ink in which Parker's signature was written agreed with a specimen taken from the public-house where Parker said he had been entrapped into signing a paper. Thus Parker was corroborated and Brinkley was convicted and hanged for murder.

The unlikelihood of an ordinary detective acquiring anything like sufficient knowledge to draw adequate scientific conclusions is shown by the fact that on one branch of medico-legal research alone—that of mammalian hair—Dr. John Glaister, Jun., has taken by micro-photography and classified 1,700 specimens.

There have, of course, been many occasions on which a man's life has literally depended upon a hair. Yet, as Dr. Glaister has pointed out, "certainty of recognition depends upon long practice derived from the study of fibres of known origin." There is a case quoted by Dr. Gross.

An old woman was murdered. In her hand were found three peculiar hairs, striped brown and black, which she had torn from her assailant in their desperate struggle. Suspicion fell upon her son, whose hair was like those she had gripped. He was arrested. The three hairs and samples of the suspect's hair were sent to three eminent scientists for microscopic examination. They gave detailed reports which established the striking similarity of the hairs.

"And yet," said Dr. Gross, "in spite of the strange coincidence of the phenomena, which, according to these experienced medical men, is so rare, the accused was not the assassin of his mother; when subsequently the murderer of the old woman was discovered it was found that his hair was also striped in the same way and was astonishingly like that of the son of the deceased woman."

It is also easy to be deceived by stains that look like blood. There was an instance where a man was suspected of murder because there were red stains upon his shirt and collar. It was subsequently shown that these had been caused by the rain extracting the colour from a red handkerchief which he wore round his neck. In another case alleged bloodstains on a knife had been caused by the juice of a lemon.

Yet, in proper hands, both blood and hairs may tell their tale. Sir William Wilcox, the Principal Medical

Adviser to the Home Office, once had a coat sent to him for examination during an epidemic of horse-maiming. This had bloodstains upon it. In a coat pocket was a handkerchief which was also marked with bloodstains. Under the microscope the blood proved to be mammalian, and the delicate precipitin test showed the stains on the sleeve to be from a horse, while those on the handkerchief were from a human being. The coat was then closely examined with a lens, and Sir William discovered some short bay hairs and two or three black hairs. From these facts he was able to say that the condition of the coat was consistent with the theory that its wearer had maimed a bay horse with black points, and had cut his finger in doing so.

In a recent case, referred to elsewhere, an important part of the evidence which resulted in the conviction of two murderers related to a revolver shell-case which had been found in a stolen car abandoned by the murderers. On the base of the shell were the gunsmith's file-marks, which enabled a revolver found in the possession of one of the suspects to be absolutely identified as the weapon from which the fatal bullet had been fired. Many experts have made numberless experiments with firearms to obtain data on which to base inferences in murder cases. Some of these have been concerned with the chemical changes that take place of the residue left in the barrel of a weapon after it has been fired, by which an estimate of the time the last shot was fired may be arrived at and the kind of explosive used in the cartridge decided. The metal of which bullets are made differs. Most bullets used with automatic pistols, for

instance, are usually coated with cupro-nickel, while those of a revolver are uncoated. Analysis of a bullet will sometimes betray a murderer.

Another method which has been experimented with at the Bureau of Forensic Ballistics in New York it is claimed will prove infallibly whether a bullet has been fired from a particular weapon or not. Microphotographs are said to show that the impress of the rifling left on bullets differs even in weapons of the same pattern and manufacture. A spent bullet found in or near the victim of a shooting affair is compared with another fired from the weapon under suspicion. Both bullets are then placed under a microscope and slowly revolved by a special mechanism. If the marks upon them are exactly alike, the weapon with which the crime was committed is declared to be shown beyond doubt.*

I have already referred to Dr. Glaister's classification of hairs. The countless sub-divisions into which criminological research may lead is also illustrated by Mr. Ainsworth Mitchell's monograph on pencil writings, in which he recounts analyses of different types of pencils, from the modern graphite with its clay and wax admixture to the old metallic lead and the composition of copying-ink pencils.

Writing with secret inks is not of very frequent occurrence in ordinary criminal investigation, although it has figured in betting frauds.

During the war the question of sympathetic writing in espionage and counter-espionage was of importance. In fact, an electric flat-iron was part of the equipment of the postal censors' office. The application of heat,

* British experts do not agree that this is so.

of course, will develop many sympathetic inks. Documents in which it is suspected secret ink has been used are first examined with a lens for abrasions caused by a pen. Iodine vapour will develop most of them. One spy wore a collar saturated with potassium ferrocyanide so that by simply dipping the end in water an invisible ink could be obtained which might be developed with an iron salt.

Kuepferle, the German captain, who committed suicide during his trial, attempted to send a secret message regarding ships in the North Sea written in invisible ink between the lines of what was apparently an ordinary business letter. In his room after his arrest were found a cut lemon, a pen, and a bottle of formalin. Now, formalin used on a steel pen makes lemon juice require a higher temperature than usual for development, and at the trial a scientific witness gave evidence to that effect. In cross-examination this gentleman was asked by counsel for the defence whether formalin could be used for the feet. With cold humour Sir John Simon put the question in re-examination: "Have you ever heard of formalin being applied to the feet by means of a steel pen?"

The attempts to introduce science into detective work sometimes border on the grotesque. In America experiments have been made with an apparatus called a sphygmomanometer, or "lie detector." This is attached to a person, and by an ingenious device the varying action of the heart and the amount of blood pressure are indicated on a revolving drum of paper. The theory is that the emotions of a person under examination are instantly revealed by the marks on the paper. A terrifying photograph of two masked officers

applying this new trial by ordeal to a suspect lies before me. Claims are made that it has been successful in sorting out the innocent from the guilty, but I imagine it would be a bold man who would attempt to introduce it into court as evidence.

Large claims were made for the drug scopolamin at a meeting of the American Medical Association a year or two ago. This is a drug employed in the "twilight sleep" system.

A person under the influence of scopolamin, it is said, becomes even more veracious than George Washington. Not only can he not tell a lie, but he must tell the truth. His volition in the matter is destroyed while his memory is not affected.

Experiments were carried out on several people, including convicts in St. Quentin Prison, who were injected with the drug. They are said to have satisfied those present, although others may not find them absolutely conclusive. I quote a newspaper report :

> John L. Farrar, convicted of murdering a Chinese in Sacramento, a man who had kept a closed mouth since entering the prison, told of the hold-up five years ago in which the crime was committed. He told a fuller story than had been told before, and placed the murder on the shoulders of his pal, Roy Carver, also serving time in St. Quentin, convincing psychologists that he spoke the truth.
>
> John Johnson, a negro, grand larceny prisoner from Stockton, not only admitted the major crime for which he was sentenced, but bared a long list of burglaries and hold-ups of which he was guilty, crimes that had never before been charged against his name, giving dates and places, revealing the names of "fences" who had received stolen jewels and other loot from him.

Other experiments are said to have been successful, and Dr. R. E. House, who discovered the qualities of the drug, has at least one official testimonial :

DALLAS, TEXAS,
April 19, 1923.

In *re* the State of Texas *v.* Albert Head, charged with automobile theft, I desire to state his acquittal by the trial jury was predicated on the facts obtained by Dr. House while Head was under the influence of a drug.

SHELBY S. COX,
Criminal District Attorney of Dallas County.

A drug which can compel the truth should by this time have cleared America of most of its criminals. I have not heard that this is the case.

Science must play an ever-increasing part in the work of criminal investigation, yet there will always remain a greater difference between the laboratory specialist and what one may call the working detective than there is between the medical specialist and the general practitioner. Even the medico-legal experts must tend to a narrower specialisation. The pathologist, the analyst, the toxicologist, the chemist, each have fields that demand unremitting research and a fund of experience. But they must always be regarded as consultants.

However well educated the detective may be professionally or academically, he must always be able to fall back on these men. The special knowledge which he acquires will be different from theirs. For instance, he will know that a pickpocket never wears gloves, while a burglar frequently does ; that stolen silver is not used by coiners (it is too hard to be

moulded), while stolen cheque-books may find their way into the hands of forgers.

Which is not to say that a detective may not have a good general knowledge of the scientific side of his calling. This enables him to collaborate more effectively with the experts, and to use the machinery of investigation efficiently. A bloodstain by itself may not convict a man. But a bloodstain, the statement of an informant, the track of a motor tyre, a finger-print, a piece of torn paper, when added together may be convincing evidence of a crime. It is for the detective to observe the possible significance of these things, to submit them to the respective specialists, and to draw his conclusions from their reports.

The good detective does not pretend to know all about everything, but he knows where to go to learn all about anything.

CHAPTER III

THE ROBIN REDBREASTS

SOMETHING of the history of those picturesque and shrewd, if sometimes unscrupulous, forerunners of the modern detective, the old Bow Street runners, I have told in another place.* But in any book dealing with detective exploits it would be unfair to omit some reference to them. For, although the honesty of many of them may be questioned, they were responsible for many remarkable feats of criminal investigation.

Old John Townsend was perhaps the most prominent personality among them. This little, plump, illiterate man, who became the favoured bodyguard of George III., and his successors, George IV. and William IV., was the son of a coal-heaver, who had begun life sifting cinders and blacking boots in Newgate. Here, no doubt, he began to acquire that peculiar and extensive knowledge of rogues and roguery which led to the successes of his after-career.

Townsend had a very considerable notion of his dignity, but he was not ashamed of his birth. There is a story told of him by a contemporary :

"Two young noblemen meeting him one day near the palace, one of the above *sprigs* of nobility said to the other, 'I will introduce you to old Townsend, I know him well. Come here, Townsend,' said he with considerable hauteur, at the same time taking a pinch

* "Scotland Yard: Its History and Associations" (Geoffrey Bles).

of snuff, and surveying the veteran officer from head to foot. 'I wish to ascertain a fact. In the earlier part of your life were you not a coal-heaver?'

"'Yes, my lord,' answered Townsend, making a bow with the most profound respect, 'it is very true; but let me tell your lordship, if you had been reared as a coal-heaver you would have remained a coal-heaver up to the present hour.'"

When he first met King George III. at Windsor Castle he thrust himself forward in front of the colleagues who accompanied him. The King surveyed him through the single-barrelled opera-glass which he constantly carried. "Who are you?" he demanded. "Townsend, eh? You fellow, Townsend, they tell me sharp, and steady, and loyal, eh, Townsend? Sharp eye, too, very sharp."

The King trusted and humoured him. When his first Royal patron died Townsend was asked if he did not miss him very much.

"I believe you, I do," he replied, lifting his hat from his head—a habit of his when royalty was mentioned. "Why, bless you! His Gracious Majesty"—again he doffed his hat—"and myself were like brothers. Bless you! He wouldn't go nowhere without me."

A little before Townsend died an acquaintance made reference to the peculiar style of his hat. The old runner retorted: "That hat, sir, was given to me by George IV.; God rest his soul." "But I thought it was your own cut?" observed the other. "God bless your soul, and so it was; the King took his cut from mine, and many times used to say that until that time he had never looked like a gentleman."

A perhaps prejudiced picture of him is given by one of his acquaintances. "This man, who was said to have commenced life as a costermonger, became by his effrontery and impudence, enhanced by a certain share of low cunning and low wit, the head of his profession. He derived a large income from the Christmas-boxes of the nobility and of other parties at whose routs he was employed to detect, or keep away improper characters, who, he persuaded his patrons, would be present if he were not in attendance.

"As to his personal appearance he was a very smart little man—clean as paint, to use his own phrase—and I think peculiar in his costume. He was generally encased in a light and loud suit, knee-breeches and short gaiters, and a white hat of great breadth of brim. Once when he was bathing near Milbank, some thieves maliciously stole his clothes, and it was said he was compelled to run home in the state he emerged from the water."

In spite of his peculiarities, however, there can be no doubt of his consummate daring and skill in his profession. When Jerry Abershaw, a noted desperado, shot two runners from the Union Hall Police Office, one of whom was killed and the other dangerously wounded it was Townsend who took up the trail and arrested the murderer. Abershaw was so entirely reckless that he abused and jeered at the judge when he was sentenced to death, and went to execution laughing and joking and entirely unconcerned. Townsend gave a whimsical account of the execution to a House of Commons Committee.

"In Abershaw's case I said to the sheriff: 'The only difficulty in hanging this fellow upon this place

(Kennington Common) is its being so near Lord Spencer's house.' But we went down and pointed out a particular place; he was hung at the particular pitch of the hill where he was used to do the work. If there was a person ever went to see that man hanging, I am sure there was a hundred thousand. I received information that they meant to cut him down. I said to Sir Richard Ford (a Bow Street magistrate): 'I will counteract this; in order to have it done right I will go and sit up all night, and have eight or ten officers at a distance, for I shall nail these fellows'; for I talked cant language to him. However, we had the officers there, but nobody ever came, or else, being so close to Kent Street, they would have come down and sawed the gibbet, and taken it all away, for Kent Street was a very desperate place, though it is not so now."

Although intolerably loquacious and boastful before this Committee, he said some very sensible things. For instance: "I will take upon myself to say that the confining a person for five years will be more punishment than ten executions. I know to an old thief it would be dreadful day after day." He was in favour of inflicting the capital punishment only for murder and a few other serious offences. And again: "I agree with George Barrington (a notorious confidence man and pickpocket), whom I brought from Newcastle; and however great Lord Chief Baron Eyre's speech was to him, after he had answered him it came to this climax: 'Now,' says he, 'Townsend, you heard what the chief baron said to me; a fine, flowery speech, was it not?' 'Yes.' 'But he did not answer the question I put him.' Now, how could he? Now,

after all the chief baron said to him after he was acquitted, giving him advice, this word was everything. Says he, 'My lord, I have paid great attention to what you have been stating to me, after my acquittal; I return my sincere thanks to the jury for their goodness; but your lordship says you lament very much that a man of my abilities should not turn my abilities to better use. Now, my lord, I have only this reply to make: I am ready to go into any service, to work for my labour (*sic*), if your lordship will but find me a master.' What was the reply to that? 'Gaoler, take the prisoner away.' Why, who should employ him? That was the point."

I cannot resist a final quotation from this gentleman. In common with other officers, he was of the opinion that if the disreputable public-houses—"flash-houses"—were suppressed it would be more difficult to obtain information and to apprehend rogues. Here Townsend shows his boastful vanity, his common sense, and his code of self-respect.

"Certainly the flash-house can do the officer no harm, if he does not make harm of it; if an officer goes there and acts foolishly, and does anything improper, the same as for me to go to-night to all the brothels (I believe I know all of them), but was there ever anyone who would say that I went and asked to have a glass of wine, and so on, and that no money should be asked? What sort of a servant should I be? I ought to be turned out and never employed in the department of the police again.

"Who has been more in confidence than I have been with the youngest part of society of the highest rank? How often have I gone to brothels, there to

talk over a little accident that might happen to A's son or B's son, or my lord this or the other's son? But the consequence was not a morsel of liberty, or how would Townsend act upon those functions of authority and get what the parties asked me to do? No, he must go there full of power, with great distance towards the keeper of that brothel. . . . No, I will take upon myself to say I never drank a glass of wine with those sort of characters, because it will not do. In order to execute my duty properly, I must keep them at a proper distance; and it is only a foolish man that would attempt it."

The salary of the runners was a guinea a week, though there were many ways, legitimate and illegitimate, of adding to it. Indeed, many of them left very considerable fortunes. They favoured red waistcoats, from which the nickname "Robin Redbreasts" was derived, and carried a baton surmounted by a tiny gilt crown as a staff of office.

Instances of their uncommon intrepidity are many. Vickery declared that he was cut to pieces in an attempt to arrest a murderer. He was six months recovering from his wounds, and the generous authorities paid his doctor's bill. Armstrong had a long record of hand-to-hand encounters with desperate characters. Once he and a highwayman fought along the roofs of three houses at Chatham. The robber fired a pistol and Armstrong closed with him. After a fierce struggle, in which captor and captive were nearly precipitated into the street below, the runner got the upper hand. The prisoner was convicted and executed.

George Ruthven was a runner who had some remarkable successes. To a natural suavity and tact he

united a keen brain and a resolute gallantry that was daunted at no odds. He is described as being a middle-aged, powerfully-built man, with red face, sandy hair, and small expressive eyes, who invariably wore a blue coat and a black cravat.

It was Ruthven who was foremost in the raid on the Cato Street conspirators, who had planned to assassinate the entire Cabinet of the day while they were at dinner. Twenty-five of these men, heavily armed, had assembled in a stable, approached by a narrow staircase, up which only one man at a time could proceed. Ruthven brushed aside a sentinel and led the way. The man immediately following him was shot dead as they burst into the room. Instantly the lights were put out, and a wild mêlée with sword and pistol took place in the darkness. Ruthven, afraid to use his pistols, fought with his bare hands.

His order to surrender was met with a fierce snarl of "Kill them!" The few police officers who had reached the loft were overpowered and thrown down the narrow staircase. Ruthven, with quick wit, saved himself by joining in the cry of "Kill them!" and so got to the ground floor safely. Here some of a detachment of Guards were waiting, but Thistlewood, the leader of the conspirators, cut his way through and, with others, for the time made good his escape.

A second time Ruthven, followed by three other Bow Street runners, rushed the narrow staircase where the remainder of the party remained at bay. It was a desperate essay, of which he spoke casually. "I believe only four of us got up. The party in the room fired directly at the staircase, thinking we were coming up in numbers. If they had not done

so they would have killed me, for I stood at one side of it."

With his own hands Ruthven secured two of the nine men who were captured on this occasion, and he played a part in the ultimate search for and arrest of Thistlewood.

A singular investigation that was entrusted to Ruthven was in connection with the murder of William Weare, a gambler and billiard sharp, who was killed and robbed by a gang of adventurers in a lonely country cottage near Elstree. Through this crime arose the well-known definition of a gentleman, which was given in evidence: "He was a gentleman; he drove a gig." It was also responsible for the famous broadside ballad:

> So Ruthven went, from Bow Street sent,
> Searching the country over,
> Until he pitched into Joe Hunt,
> John Thurtell, and Bill Probert.
>
> His throat they cut from ear to ear,
> His brains they punched in;
> His name was Mr. William Weare,
> Wot lived in Lyons Inn.

One October evening a gig was seen to drive rapidly to a cottage occupied by a man named Probert at Gill's Hill, near Elstree. Very shortly afterwards there was the report of a firearm, followed by angry voices and groans. The next day a blood-stained penknife and a pistol were found in some bushes near the cottage. Almost at once rumours of murder became current, and the local magistrates took the matter up. A little inquiry directed suspicion

against Probert himself, a gambling, dissolute ex-officer of marines named John Thurtell, and an associate of theirs named Hunt. Weare had been in their company on the night of the supposed murder and had not been seen since. At this point the assistance of Ruthven was invoked.

Here may be given Ruthven's own account of the arrest of Thurtell, whom he knew very well as a shady character.

"After it had been ascertained that it was human blood* and human hair upon the pistol, and Hunt and Probert were in custody, I left in order to secure John Thurtell. I found him at the Coach and Horses, Conduit Street, Hanover Square. (This was at half-past seven in the morning, and Thurtell was still in bed.) I said: 'John, my boy, I want you.'

"'What do you want, George?' said he.

"I replied: 'Never mind; I'll tell you presently.'

"Thurtell had been anticipating serious proceedings against him for setting his house on fire in the City, by Mr. Barber Beaumont of the County Fire Office. It was highly probable that he supposed that I wanted him on that charge. He, however, prepared to accompany me. He got in, and I handcuffed him to one side of the rail of my trap. I drove on towards Hertford (? Watford).

"On the road nothing could be more chatty and free than the conversation on the part of Thurtell. If he did suspect where I was going to take him, he played an innocent part very well, and artfully pretended total ignorance. We had several glasses of grog on the road.

* No test could distinguish human blood at that time.

"When we arrived I drove up to the inn, where Probert and Hunt were in charge of the local constables.

"'Let us have some brandy and water, George,' said Thurtell, after he had shaken hands with his associates. I went out of the room to order it.

"'Give us a song,' said Thurtell, and Hunt, who was a beautiful singer, struck up 'Mary, list, awake!'"

"I paused with the door in my hand and said to myself: 'Is it possible that these men are murderers?'"

Ruthven had found bloodstains on Thurtell's clothes, a penknife belonging to Weare in his pockets, and a fellow-pistol to the one with which the murder was assumed to have been committed at his lodgings. But although these and other circumstances made it black against all the prisoners, they could not be convicted of murder until the body was discovered. Finally, Probert turned King's evidence, Weare's body was found in a pond which he indicated, and the trial took place. To enable Probert to give evidence, he was formally acquitted. Thurtell and Hunt were convicted, and the former was hanged. Hunt was reprieved and transported for life. Probert escaped for the moment, only to be executed for horse-stealing a year later.

It is not often that an officer of police finds a private feud jump with his public duty. Such an event happened to Ruthven, who was married to an exceedingly pretty and vivacious woman. She fell a victim to the fascinations of a dashing young fellow, a horse-coper, who dabbled in the dirtier side of horse-racing, one

James Haseltine, or "Shock Jem." For this man she left her husband, and George Ruthven neither forgot nor forgave.

Once, years later, Shock Jem ventured on an allusion to the episode in George Ruthven's presence. With a fierce imprecation the Bow Street man swore that if the other ever spoke to him again he would blow his brains out. Cowed by a threat that, coming from such a man, held no empty meaning, Shock Jem sneaked away, and thereafter sedulously avoided the man he had wronged.

But with a bitter tenacity Ruthven year after year watched the other, waiting an opportunity. At last it came, and James Haseltine found himself under arrest on a charge of defrauding the firm of Tattersall. The runner had spared neither energy or money to insure that his enemy was left no loophole of escape, and he was transported for seven years. Ruthven himself declared that it had cost him £3,000 out of his own pocket to bring about his revenge.

Among the dandies of Bow Street was George Leadbitter. A big man of imposing appearance and impeccable manners, he changed his white neckcloth twice a day. He had once heard Sir Richard Birnie, the Bow Street magistrate, observe that white neckcloths were most becoming to gentlemen. What Townsend was to Court and Society functions, Leadbitter was to race meetings. He held a retainer from the Jockey Club to "maintain decorum" and keep the grand stands and select betting enclosures free from undesirable persons.

Leadbitter it was who, with the help of Ruthven, unravelled a horse-poisoning plot that created con-

sternation among racegoers in the early years of the last century.

The trouble began in 1809, when Lord Darlington's horse, Rubens, the favourite for the Pavilion Stakes at Brighton, was suspected to have been "got at" the night before the race. However, it actually ran and won, and the matter might have been forgotten had it not happened that in July of the same year three horses in the training stables of a man named Stevens at Newmarket had died from poisoning on the eve of a race in which one of them was reckoned to have a good chance. A reward of one hundred guineas was offered for the discovery of the perpetrators of this offence, but without avail.

Two years later, at the opening of the Newmarket Spring Meeting, six horses at the training stables of Richard Prince were poisoned. Four of them—among which was Pirouette, the favourite for the Craven Stakes, and a horse named Dandy—died, and two others were rendered unfit for further racing. Leadbitter and Ruthven were employed to get to the bottom of the mystery, and stimulated by the offer of a reward of 500 guineas for the discovery of the culprit.

They early came to the conclusion that the horses had been poisoned when watering. But the lids of the water-troughs were clamped down and padlocked except when the horses were brought to them. How had the poison been introduced? The first search was for confederates among the stable hands. This led nowhere. Their honesty seemed unquestionable.

The Bow Street men then patiently sought for those who might have profited by the crime. Gradually their suspicions focussed on Daniel Dawson, a well-

known tout, who had a turf companion named Cecil Bishop, who at one time had been assistant to a Wardour Street chemist. Dawson had laid heavily against Pirouette and Dandy, and had advised others to do so.

On this the police officers acted and put both men under arrest. Then it was that Bishop weakened. He admitted that he had supplied the poison, a strong solution of arsenic, and it had been injected into the horse-troughs by a syringe with a narrow bent nozzle, which could be inserted in the slightest opening. To get at the favourites it had been necessary to take chances on poisoning other horses supplied from the same troughs. Other evidence accumulated, and Dawson was put on trial, with Bishop as King's evidence. He was acquitted on the technical point that he did not administer the poison, and immediately rearrested and indicted under another Act. This time he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Notwithstanding influential efforts to obtain a reprieve, he suffered the extreme penalty.

Leadbitter had a large criminal acquaintance, among whom was "the father of all the robbers," Bill Cauty, who is said to have had half a million pounds pass through his hands before he was finally brought to book. Cauty had started life as a bank clerk, and in those days all articles of value, including bankers' parcels, were invariably sent by mail-cart. This offered opportunities for theft in a variety of ways to a man with "inside" information. The main scheme was a matter of collusion with clerks in certain coach offices, and with their help consignments of immense value were abstracted, while no shadow of

proof could be brought against the culprits. Leadbitter was among the Bow Street runners called in, and although at that time he had nothing definite against Cauty, he told the authorities enough to insure that the clerk was thrown out.

Cauty took the Turf as a side line, but his organising abilities and knowledge of banking methods still enabled him to carry on, with the help of confederates and tools. The matter of these robberies was at last examined by a House of Commons Committee. Leadbitter was examined. He was asked if he knew who concocted them. "I do," he replied.

"Then why don't you apprehend him?"

"Because we can't get sufficient proof; and it would be useless to arrest him unless we could insure a conviction."

"Is he a man who bets largely on the Turf?"

"He is."

"Are the noblemen and gentlemen who bet with him aware of his real character? Have they any knowledge of these nefarious pursuits?"

"Oh yes. They prefer to bet with him because he always pays."

Many years passed. Cauty's powers began to fail him and he fell upon evil times. He planned an attempt on a cash-box at the London and Westminster Bank in St. James's Square, a cash-box which the cashier admitted sometimes contained as much as £100,000. With the aid of a confederate he brought off the coup after long and skilful planning. He was walking down the Haymarket with the box concealed in a black bag when he was seized by Leadbitter. The runner had been aware of the scheme almost from its incep-

tion, and had waited to catch the other red-handed. His associate was run down, and both were sentenced to life transportation. It is said that old Cauty, who suffered much from the infirmities of age, was released without serving the sentence, on the plea of Leadbitter.

CHAPTER IV

THE FLYING SQUAD

As might have been expected, the Flying Squad of Scotland Yard has caught the imagination of the public. Inevitably there has sprung up a great deal of misconception of its intentions and methods. It has its moments of thrilling drama, but it is not, and never has been, meant vitally to change the ordinary organisation of the Criminal Investigation Department. It is purely and simply an auxiliary service. It is not designed to take over the investigation of great murder cases or of abstruse mysteries; and, in fact, it never does. It is to the C.I.D. what destroyers are to a battle fleet—a means of swift and deadly attack at unexpected moments.

Nor is the idea of a Flying Squad altogether new. Some thirty years ago, before the days of motor-cars, Chief Detective-Inspector Frederick Fox, whose name is written large in the annals of the Criminal Investigation Department, was seized with the idea that the divisional detectives were hampered in dealing with certain criminals, partly because they were too well known and partly because crooks were beginning to operate in places wide apart, so that they were not always closely followed up by the local men.

So he suggested that four of the brightest young men in the service should be given a roving commission as a "flying brigade" to act under his supervision. They were to be sent here and there, wherever

they were wanted, and were to be entirely controlled from Scotland Yard.

There were not wanting conservatives among the older officers who openly expressed doubt of the utility of this new-fangled notion by a junior chief inspector. Things were well enough, and the experiment was likely to prove a waste of time and energy.

But the Commissioner was willing to take a chance. He approved Fox's scheme and the brigade was created. It quickly showed its merit.

One of its first exploits was to break up a gang of "ladder burglars" who had long defied arrest. This gang was headed by a corpulent, white-headed old gentleman called "Quiet Joe," who never pulled off operations in the same district twice. "Quiet Joe" was so elusive that there were police officers who bluntly declared that he was a myth and that the chase was after a will-o'-the-wisp.

Indeed, the young enthusiasts of the brigade were for a while baffled. Failing to find Joe, they hunted London for a close friend of his—one "Razor Bill." This gentleman was found at Camberwell after a fortnight's hard work, and thereafter he was shadowed night and day. Sooner or later, it was felt, he would be in communication with Joe.

Patience was at last rewarded when "Quiet Joe" and "Razor Bill" met at a public-house in Ludgate Circus. Each of them was now closely watched, and it was discovered that they spent much time in public libraries, where they pored over reference books, such as "Who's Who" and the "Peerage" and directories. It was evident that they were meditating a new job. When they made a journey to Fleet Street and

bought a large-scale map of the Bristol district, it did not need much diagnosis to realise that they had hit on an objective.

The day came when, dressed as farmers, they took tickets at Paddington for Bristol. In the same train went the Flying Brigade. At Bristol the suspects left their handbags in the cloak-room while they booked lodgings in the town. One man followed them and the others got in touch with the local police. The handbags were then opened with skeleton keys.

"They contained," ex-Inspector Frank Pike, who was concerned in the affair, told me, "the finest set of housebreaking implements I had ever seen at that time—two powerful jemmies, a handsaw for cutting ladders, wire for making booby traps for pursuers, poison for dogs."

Now arose that little difference between British methods and those sometimes adopted by police of other countries. Instead of waiting to catch these crooks red-handed, the detective arrested them as suspected persons when they returned to claim their bags. That made a difference of perhaps several years in the sentence they ultimately received.

The Flying Brigade did much good service in other directions, notably against pickpockets, but ultimately it died out. It is not quite clear why.

There can be small doubt that it was the remembrance of the effective service of this little detachment which led to the experiment being renewed when the Criminal Investigation Department was refashioned after the war. Following the appointment of four detective superintendents to supervise districts, came the creation of a Flying Squad of eight men, who were

supplied with a motor-tender and rushed off, as occasion demanded, to any district of London. The motor had come into its own with the criminal fraternity, and this was one of the counter-moves by the police. This was more or less experimental and little was said of it officially. The annual report of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police merely said :

> Some excellent work has been done by a small centralised body of detective officers working under the direction of superintendents of areas in following up and arresting or dispersing gangs of criminals, who were engaged in shop or warehouse breaking in different parts of the district.

So successful did the scheme prove that in a very short while it was extended. According to Superintendent Carlin, one of the original "Big Four" :

> We proposed to form a Flying Squad of the best men in the Metropolitan C.I.D. They were to be brought to the Yard and trained under our supervision. Four inspectors should be appointed to be in command of this Flying Squad, and the duties of that body were, first and foremost, to go where they were required and sent, either to work with the divisional inspectors or independently as directed.

Here it should be explained that there has long been available at Scotland Yard a body which is often confused with the Flying Squad. This is a special detective patrol which is sent out to certain districts during an epidemic of crime, particularly during the long winter nights, to reinforce the local men of the C.I.D.

As soon as the possibilities of a Flying Squad were appreciated it was increased to twenty picked men, headed by such able officers as Detective-Inspectors

Grosse, Hambrook, Cooper, and Gillard. Swift motor-cars were provided and some of them fitted with wireless. It became possible to transport rapidly a group of experienced men to any part of the 700 square miles of the Metropolitan Police district, and to maintain constant touch with them while they were on the move. Rogues who had taken the trouble to make themselves acquainted with the appearance of local plain clothes officers were surprised by the swift advent of strangers from Scotland Yard at moments when they had felt themselves safe.

At the present time the Squad is controlled by a chief inspector assisted by four inspectors and a staff of thirty.

The Squad first became effective at race meetings, where pickpockets and swindlers, after the first touch of amazement at the sudden descent in force of strange detectives, were inclined to look on the new method as a violation of the rules of the game. Under the old system they had known within limits who they were likely to be up against and to regulate their proceedings accordingly. Similarly with pickpockets. A "wizz mob" which operated, say, at Hammersmith Broadway, would immediately suspend business and become as innocent as children if they saw a local detective in the vicinity. But this type of gang slipped up again and again when a detachment of the Flying Squad stole upon them unawares.

The general run of the Flying Squad men have an aptitude for playing character parts. There is seldom need for them to disguise their faces—except, it may be, by going unshaven and with unbrushed hair—but as road-sweepers, milkmen, hawkers, sailors, or in a

hundred and one other ways they find it possible to spring surprises on persons engaged in nefarious pursuits. This, with the mobility afforded by their cars, gives them an advantage in handling certain matters of crime.

But the real essential intent of the Flying Squad is swift action. With them it is all or nothing. For the ordinary criminal investigation after the event—the patient sifting of evidence, a tireless search for clues—the normal resources of the C.I.D. are more fitted.

A dramatic episode of the early days of the Flying Squad may be recalled. A gang of audacious and reckless burglars was believed to be planning some exploit. Detective-Inspector Grosse, with a spotted muffler and well-worn cap, lurked about the public-houses in the neighbourhood of the Waterloo Road and soon gathered that the ruffians, who were headed by a desperate character, who, among many other terms of imprisonment, had served one for the attempted murder of a policeman, were taking trial runs about the suburbs of London, looking over shops which might be rifled with comparative immunity. They would have preferred furs as their booty, but they were not particular.

Grosse observed that they had a motor-van on which the red rear light was fixed at the top instead, as is usual, at the bottom near the axle. So, on the night for which the expedition was fixed, he had a Flying Squad car handy, and, with a number of his men, he had no difficulty in following the quarry from a respectable distance.

But the best laid plans go astray. The robbers ran out for some miles and at last drew up some distance

from a large tailor's shop. One of the gang descended to spy out the land. To his dismay and astonishment, two big uniformed policemen were chatting outside the shop. The robbers withdrew with a chagrin only equalled by that of the detectives, who had spent a fruitless night out of bed.

But Grosse knew that the gang's finances were short and that they would soon make another effort. The next day he received information that took him to the Old Kent Road at three in the morning in the guise of a drunken soldier, the while there was hidden in a by-street an inconspicuous van in which were concealed eight of the Flying Squad.

Confident in his disguise, Grosse rolled clumsily against the crooks' van and so was able to make sure of the identity of four of the men. Presently the van started, and Grosse, now perfectly sober, followed at a discreet distance with the Flying Squad car. Near Westminster Abbey the leading van halted to pick up some confederates. Then it drove on, always with its shadow in the distance. A fruitless attempt was made on a jeweller's shop in Vauxhall Bridge Road, and the crooks drove on to Buckingham Palace Road, where five of the robbers descended armed with crowbars and jemmies. Again they were frightened off by the approach of a couple of policemen, and Grosse, who now had plenty of evidence of their intentions, decided to wait no longer.

He gave a signal, and the Flying Squad car abandoned all attempt at concealment and dashed forward. There was all the element of a thrilling cinema picture in a wild chase through the darkness and driving rain. The police car gained and in a little smashed de-

liberately into the other van. Then ensued a fierce fight between the Flying Squad armed with batons, and the robbers with knives and jemmies. The police won, of course, but not till several men had been knocked out. The capture of this gang stopped an epidemic of shop and warehouse breaking for a long time.

One defect of the equipment of the Flying Squad at first was that the cars were all alike and thus easily recognised after they had been once seen. Those which were equipped with wireless carried an aerial outside the car, a distinctive sign with obvious disadvantages. Now the cars are of all makes and colours and the aerials are out of sight. Experiments made with wireless telephony were not a success, and it has been deemed wiser to use telegraphy in the Morse code. A number of wireless experts are attached to the Squad.

Even to-day, although it now numbers about sixty men and twenty or more cars, the Flying Squad is still, to a point, experimental. How far it may ultimately be carried no one can foresee. The tendency is to develop towards an organised force which can be used, not only to cope with the motor bandit, but with many of those crimes in which the criminals rely upon swift motor transit.

A number of the newer cars are of considerable speed—in some cases they can sustain a rate of more than eighty miles an hour—but these are intended as "chasers" for pursuits that do not often occur. They are said to be bullet proof, and can seat six men. Two devices can be brought into operation at an instant's notice. A sign "Metropolitan Police," which is generally not visible, can be displayed and illuminated

at night, and a bell under the bonnet can be used to give warning like a fire-bell, and secure a right of way.

For the ordinary tenders a high rate of speed is not so essential. They are used for routine day-to-day purposes, for carrying detectives from one point to another, and for patrol purposes. An arrangement of mirrors enables observation to be kept from the cars without the detectives themselves being visible. Those in the interior can maintain communication with the driver by speaking-tube, or by a sort of ship's telegraph, with such instructions as "Stop," "Slow," "First right," and so on. The resemblance to ship's routine is also carried out by the log-book, in which every movement of the car is recorded and messages received or sent out are entered.

A word should be said about the drivers of these vans, who are picked and trained with sedulous care. These men, when they are fully trained, get six guineas a week—and they earn it. All of them are alert young men with something more than average education. But I imagine that nerve is really more necessary than academic qualifications.

Among the more spectacular of the tests imposed on them are some that would do credit to the hair-raising ingenuity of the moving-picture producer. Down a country lane comes a car, takes a corner all unsuspecting, and a shot rings out from ambush. The driver is "wounded" in the arm. With the limb dangling limp by his side he has to continue the journey, manipulating the swift-moving car with one hand, not knowing what other contingency he may have to face ere he is through.

Again, while the car is speeding fast to its destina-

tion, a bundle of hay is flung from a hedge directly in front of it. This is a more nervy ordeal, for only the coldest co-ordination of brain and muscle can meet with it. A second's hesitation in doing the right thing, the slightest lapse of judgment, is likely to bring trouble.

These and a dozen other devices are tried to catch the driver napping. If a criminal can find some trap that has not already been tried on a Flying Squad driver he is a clever man.

An official sits next to the driver who is being tested, and in quick succession raps out a bewildering number of orders, each of which has to be instantly obeyed. There are not a great number of Flying Squad drivers required. Perhaps it is as well, for the man who gets through without a blunder of any sort is rare. Even when he is letter perfect in a country lane he is not passed. He has still to undergo the ultimate tests in the complicated traffic of the streets of London.

There are times when the members of the Flying Squad on isolated duties find their fertility of resource taxed to an extreme. Such a case occurred recently when Detective-Sergeants Sharpe and Gooch and Detective Dance, driving in a car near Shoreditch Church observed three doubtful characters in conference. They thought it worth while to keep an eye on these gentlemen and followed them up. By ones and twos they were joined on their walk by other men, and snatches of their conversation which reached the detectives told that they were on their way to "work the tubs"—in other words, to pick pockets at omnibus stopping-places.

In Bethnal Green Road they attempted to begin operations. There were now nine of them—rather too many for three officers to handle in the ordinary way. They bided their time.

Presently the whole gang boarded a bus with a covered top. Sharpe and his colleagues saw their opportunity. They also became passengers, and Sharpe quietly gave instructions to the driver. He was ordered to deviate slightly from his route and take the bus without a halt straight to Bethnal Green Police Station.

Only when the bus drew up under the blue lamp of the station, and at a word from Sharpe a horde of uniformed men tumbled out and surrounded it, did the pickpockets realise that they had been trapped. Thus, in the words of the magistrate who heard the case, was "one of the worst gangs in London brought to book."

Another mob of pickpockets which was broken up in the early days of the Flying Squad was the Titanic Gang. This was the largest group of organised pickpockets ever known in London, and included thirty or forty men drawn from some of the worst quarters of Hoxton. It was their habit to work in detachments of sixteen to twenty men, and, since many of them were reckless bullies prepared to fight for their liberty, it was difficult to make arrests. In the presence of a force large enough to handle them, they suspended operations, and detectives in twos and threes could only make isolated arrests at some risk.

It chanced that one day a Flying Squad tender was on its way to a big football match at Tottenham. The detectives on board observed some of the Titanic mob

at work at the tram terminus near the football ground. A victim was neatly pinned between them when one of them, turning suddenly, beheld the Flying Squad almost upon them. Unluckily for the officers, a taxicab was near by, and into this the more active of the pick-pockets tumbled and ordered the driver to take them as quickly as possible to Islington.

The Flying Squad car took up the chase, but the traffic was thick, and it was possible to do nothing more than to keep the taxicab in sight. For the best part of an hour the pursuit continued, and it was only when the thieves were in the actual vicinity of their homes in the mean streets of Hoxton that they were overtaken. Both parties dropped to the ground simultaneously, and there ensued a fight in which many of the women from the neighbourhood joined. But the detectives, scarred and scratched and bruised, clung tenaciously to their prisoners, who were at last carried away in the tender. This was the beginning of the end of the Titanic Gang.

More than most detectives, the Flying Squad man is exposed to many physical dangers, for, by the nature of his work, he is brought into contact with the most daring and reckless of the underworld. He has frequently had to intervene in race-gang feuds both on and off the course, and to deal with motor bandits who stop at little.

Naturally, there are people who owe the members of the Squad no goodwill, and there have been occasions when detectives have found themselves suddenly assailed. In 1923 a member of the Squad was attacked in a Tube station, and four men were subsequently arrested and sentenced. Others received threatening

letters written on pamphlets issued by an evangelical society. One of these had the words "Be prepared to meet your Creator. You are doomed." The writers were known and dealt with.

All that kind of thing is accepted as in the day's work. There are times when the Flying Squad men carry revolvers, but, on the whole, they prefer to take their chances with less lethal weapons.

CHAPTER V

THE EMPTY COFFIN

THERE can be no doubt that Nathaniel Druscovich ultimately made a fool of himself.* That is a matter of police history with which I have little to do here. The catastrophe of his career was his own fault, but it should not be permitted to obscure the merits of one who in his own day showed many of the qualities of a master detective.

At the time of which I am writing—this was 1865—Druscovich was the pet of Scotland Yard, a man of whom much was expected. He had a reputation for quick-witted intelligence and resource that had been earned in some remarkable cases. He stood out among his colleagues for the reason that he was a man of culture and education. In those days Scotland Yard men, however effective they may have been, were of a rougher, cruder type than those of to-day.

A dapper man, something of a fop in dress, was Druscovich at this time, with an extensive knowledge equally of foreign languages and foreign criminals. Practically every Continental case that reached Scotland Yard was passed on to Druscovich, and he usually handled them with competence and ingenuity.

Properly I should have begun this story, not with Druscovich, but with Monsieur Vital Douat, portly and prosperous, and owner of apparently one of the most flourishing wine businesses in Bordeaux. He and

* See "The Trial of the Detectives" (Geoffrey Bles, 1928).

Madame Douat, as plump and as shrewd as her husband, lived in a manner becoming the dignity of a great merchant in a delightful villa on the outskirts of the town. They entertained on a magnificent scale, and, as you will have perceived, were not least among the citizens of a great city. There may have been malicious tongues, but—pouf!—any successful man is open to the scandal of the envious. Such people might be ignored.

It was strange that a prudent, far-seeing man, as M. Douat was held to be, should have neglected one obvious safeguard for the benefit of his devoted wife until he reached middle age. The cares of business and social engagements were heavy. He was to be forgiven if he had forgotten to insure his life. He recognised the injustice in time. The point was no sooner brought to his mind than he travelled to Paris and opened negotiations with one of the biggest insurance companies in France. With a little touch of pomposity he explained who he was and presented introductions. He proposed, if arrangements could be satisfactorily made, to take out a life policy for a sum that in these days would be represented by between £5,000 and £6,000 in English money.

So impressive was his demeanour that the insurance company smoothed the way for him, and, after a medical examination, he paid the first premium and returned to Bordeaux with the policy in his pocket. With a devotion that was only natural, he confided the document to his wife.

Very shortly after this it became a matter of comment in certain circles in Bordeaux that all was not well with the affairs of M. Douat. There were firms

who felt that they had been a little incautious, and, though the plausible Douat was willing to stretch his credit to the limit of the last sou, they urged that a little cash would be necessary before they could fulfil further large orders. In fact, they became so insistent on this cash question that something had to be done.

At this crisis M. Douat took a plunge that has been the resource of lesser men. He went bankrupt. Odd to relate, his misfortunes did not arouse the sympathy of his many acquaintances. There were not wanting slanderers who hinted that Douat had not made a bad thing out of his bankruptcy, and that he still had a well-filled stocking stowed away somewhere. So persistent was this story that the authorities began to pry into it. M. Douat resented the slur on his good faith. He shook the dust of Bordeaux from his feet, embraced his dear wife—they could not prove any fraud against her—and departed unostentatiously to London to make a fresh start in the world.

Mme. Douat, thus left alone, bore up uncommonly well. She had lost no weight when, clad in the deepest black, she appeared at the office of the insurance company in Paris, and, with tears in her expressive eyes, announced the death of her husband. Her grief had not affected the most complete and businesslike precautions. She had all the documents of proof of the death of Vital Douat in order and ready for the strictest inspection. Her story was complete in every detail.

When he had gone to London he had taken mean lodgings at a little house in Ann Street, Plaistow. There on the twenty-ninth day of November he had died of aneurism of the heart. Here was a certificate

from the medical man who had attended him. Here was another certificate from the registrar of deaths. Here was a receipt for the burial fees at St. Patrick's Cemetery. The widow ventured to presume that these things were only formalities. No doubt the money would be paid over at an early date.

An urbane official spread his hands in a bland gesture. "We shall be happy to expedite a settlement by every means in our power. If you will leave these documents with me the matter shall be put in hand at once."

"How long will it take?" demanded the business-like madame.

He lifted his shoulders. "I cannot say. There is a routine—a method—in these matters. It may be a week—ten days. When we are satisfied——"

Mme. Douat caught him up quickly. "*When* you are satisfied! What more do you want? Surely these papers show without doubt that my husband is dead?"

This was the point at which Mme. Douat went, perhaps, a fraction too far. The official was struck. Why should she be so extraordinarily eager? There was something in her manner as well as in her words that made an impression on his mind. It was not altogether usual for a grief-stricken widow, hard upon the death of her husband, to come quite so completely prepared with formal proofs as this lady. The thing might be entirely straightforward, but it would bear looking at.

He put a few polite but searching questions to the woman, and her replies determined him that it would be well to withhold the money until a great deal more was known about the dead man and about her. After

all, only one premium had been paid on a comparatively big life insurance.

So, at last, he dismissed her, and an emissary was despatched down to Bordeaux to learn something about the couple. On his report, a great light was borne upon the company. The coincidence of life insurance, fraudulent bankruptcy, flight, and death was far too extraordinary. When the lady renewed her demands with threats of legal intervention unless the claim was immediately settled, she was met with a refusal framed in terms not quite so polite as before.

But, however suspicious the circumstances might appear, the insurance company knew that, unless they could prove a swindle, they would sooner or later have to pay. So they consulted a high official of the Service de Sûreté, who informed them that Douat was already wanted for the fraudulent bankruptcy affair. It was believed that Douat really had gone to London. He suggested that he should ask Scotland Yard to look into the matter.

So it was that the papers were ultimately passed over to Druscovich. "It's a funny business," said Williamson, the superintendent. "See what you can make of it."

"If these certificates are authentic," observed the other, "this man should be dead and buried."

"The insurance company is inclined to think that the death happened at a very convenient time for the lady," remarked Williamson, and Druscovich nodded.

The Sûreté had ascertained the date and the boat on which Douat was believed to have sailed, but there was no record of anyone of that name having arrived in England. Druscovich studied a passenger list and

made precise inquiries of the manner and appearance of each person. He struck the names out until only one was left. That was a gentleman who called himself Bernardi. By all accounts, Bernardi was a jovial, fat Frenchman. No one knew who he was or where he had gone to after landing. The detective inclined to a strong impression that Roberti could be no other than the bankrupt fugitive.

Druscovich went to have a look at the house in Ann Street, Plaistow, which had been given as the place of death. It proved to be a dingy workman's dwelling, which a weather-worn notice board proclaimed to be to let. The landlord was very easy to find, and was quite willing to tell all that he knew.

"There was a foreign gentleman took the place a few weeks ago," he said. "Called himself Bernardi. He couldn't speak English very well, but, as far as I could understand him, he was a waiter or something like that, and he wanted a place where he could stay and look after a sick friend. References? No, he gave me no references. He did better than that. He paid a month's rent down, and that was good enough for me."

"Did you see anything of his friend?" asked Druscovich casually.

The landlord stroked his chin. "No, can't say I did. Struck me as funny at the time. He hadn't been there a day or two when he told me that his friend had died. There was something wrong with his heart. Bernardi gave him a grand funeral—it took place on a Sunday—but he never came back to Ann Street again. I reckon he didn't care to stay in a place where his pal had died."

Some hours Druscovich spent in chatting to other

inhabitants of Ann Street. It became plain that Bernardi was the jovial Roberti of the boat. But in Ann Street he had kept himself very close and scarcely spoken to anyone. No one had seen his friend, nor had a doctor been noticed to call at the house. Druscovich began to consider the possibility that he had stumbled on a case of murder.

He had already assured himself of one thing. If the death certificate was a forgery it had not been written by either Douat or Mme. Douat. The signature was hard to decipher and there was no address. After close examination he read the name as "Critti," and the reference books showing that there was a doctor of that name, Druscovich called upon him. The doctor examined the sheet of paper that he was supposed to have signed with a puzzled face. "This is certainly a forgery," he declared. "It is not in the least like my writing, and there is no attempt at imitation. I have never known a man named Vital Douat, and I have certainly never attended a patient at Plaistow. I know nothing at all about it."

So far every step that had been taken to solve the affair added but to its complexity. A crime of some sort—it might be a mere insurance fraud, it might be something very much worse—had been committed, but it was not easy to visualise a solution that would fit all the circumstances. There were gaps which it was difficult to fill in. For instance, between the time that "Roberti" had arrived in England and the time that "Bernardi" had shown up at Plaistow there was a hiatus. If the detective could find out where Douat—if it was Douat—had spent that time he might find a key.

He spent days in exploring hotels and lodging houses where a newly arrived provincial Frenchman, anxious not to be too conspicuous, might have put up in London. At last he stumbled on a little hotel, handy to the Strand, where the staff remembered a jolly, fat Frenchman, who had registered himself as Roberti. A comparison of dates was convincing evidence, if any more was needed, that here was the place which Douat had made his first retreat.

There was one French waiter in the establishment and Druscovich calculated that this was the man most likely to know any details concerning the stranger. He ordered a bottle of wine and engaged the waiter in amiable conversation. Among his other accomplishments Druscovich spoke French like a native. The waiter, stimulated by a glass of burgundy, was easily led to discuss Bernardi.

"A complaisant gentleman," was his verdict. "He made me little trouble, and he frequently did me the honour, like m'sieu, of inviting me to share a glass of wine. We talked much together, for he rarely left the hotel—and as we were compatriots it was but natural."

Druscovich looked over the edge of his glass. "Do you happen to know what he came to London for?"

"But surely. He was a traveller in wines. He had business here."

"Ah, of course. I suppose he would write a great deal to his clients. Did he speak English well?"

The waiter made a gesture of dissent. "Indeed, but he knew little about the language. He wrote, it is true, to France. Why, there was a little joke he got me to help him in—he was a humorous man, M. Roberti—

a joke to play on a friend of his. He got me to write something out in English for him."

The detective filled the waiter's empty glass. "Really."

"Yes, monsieur. He had a friend, a M. Vital Douat, who he said would never answer his letters. So he got me to write a mock death certificate of M. Douat, which he was to send on to him with a letter saying that he now understood his silence since he was dead."

"That was a great joke," laughed the detective. "I suppose you have not heard from him since he left?"

The other had not. And since Druscovich had gained a solution of the only point in the case on which the waiter could throw any light he abruptly concluded the interview.

There remained the cemetery. The authorities remembered the burial of a man called Vital Douat. The arrangements had been made by a friend of the dead man, a Signor Rubini—Douat seems to have had a partiality for the Italian suffix. Rubini had presented a certificate from the registrar of deaths, paid the fees, and arranged for the ceremony to take place on the following Sunday. The funeral service had been conducted according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church by the Rev. Father M'Quoid, and Rubini had been the chief, in fact the only, mourner. Druscovich's informant gave the name of the undertaker.

This individual also remembered M. Rubini. That gentleman had ordered a full-sized, ready-made coffin, with a lead lining of abnormal thickness. He had insisted that the handles should be altered from the

sides to the ends of the coffin, as is the custom in France.

"And what kind of a person was put in this coffin?" asked the detective.

The undertaker hesitated. "To tell you the truth, I don't know," he said. "We delivered it by instruction at Ann Street. Rubini said that it was unnecessary for us to do anything more. He undertook to see the body in the coffin and to screw it up. We had a hearse and a mourning carriage to go to St. Patrick's Cemetery on the Sunday."

Whatever views Druscovich may have had on the innocence or ignorance of the undertaker, he said nothing then. The man was legally right in accepting the certificate of the registrar. There was no obligation on him to put the body in the coffin. As for the registrar, he had made out the formal certificate on the presentation of the forged medical notice of death. No provision of the law had been neglected.

But Druscovich had enough information now to warrant an application that the grave should be made to yield up its secret. He applied to the proper authorities and an order for exhumation was granted.

All this was done very quietly. The detective had no intention of allowing any hint of his activities to reach Douat if it could be avoided. There was, he hoped, something more than a chance of catching that gentleman off his guard. At his request a couple of men who knew Douat well were induced to take a trip from France and were sworn to secrecy.

In the cold light of a raw winter morning a temporary screen was erected round the grave to hide it from accidental outside observation. Within this en-

closure Druscovich, a doctor, officials, and the two witnesses stood in a little group, while men with picks and shovels attacked the frozen earth. The coffin was drawn to the surface, and there was a little stir among the onlookers as the officials knelt to unscrew the lid. What they expected to see they scarcely knew. The detective alone had by this time arrived at a conclusion, but, like a wise man, he kept it strictly to himself.

The lid was thrown back. They looked into a coffin which contained nothing but a few odd scraps of metal placed there to make up the weight of the supposed body. The whole of the elaborate burial was now demonstrated as an obvious sham.

"I don't seem to be wanted," remarked the doctor.

"I scarcely expected that you would be," said Druscovich, with a half smile.

As the waiter had said, M. Douat was a humorous man. Druscovich saw the joke, and it was appreciated the more by the insurance company as their caution had prevented them being several thousands of pounds out of pocket. To complete the amusement of the various parties, it was only necessary to lay hands on Douat. To this task Druscovich addressed himself with energy, and he asked the Sûreté in the meantime to look after Mme. Douat.

The lady, however, was not to be found. Something had frightened her—no doubt the stiff attitude of the insurance company—and she had disappeared. Druscovich, armed with a warrant for the arrest of Douat on charges of fraud and attempted fraud in France, followed the trail of his man to Liverpool. There he was conclusively satisfied that immediately after the bogus burial the other had set out for America under

still another assumed name. Probably Douat had felt that having done his share he could safely leave the collection of the spoils to his efficient wife.

The Scotland Yard man could do no more. It was doubtful if Douat's actions in England constituted a legal offence. Druscovich had done all and more than could have been expected from him. The running down of the fugitive now became a matter for the French police. He handed over a report to them and officially dropped the case.

For some reason or other the French people did not go to the trouble of searching for and extraditing Douat from the United States. That subtle individual, finding that the hue and cry was suspended, came to the hasty conclusion that he was forgotten. His enterprise did not find a full scope in America—and a man must live.

So he came back to Europe and took up his abode at Antwerp, where he called himself an export merchant. The sense of the theatre that he had evinced at Bordeaux and in London served him adequately for a time among the Dutchmen, and he succeeded in inducing insurance companies to issue policies on a shipment of laces, clocks, and other goods to certain foreign ports by the ship *Duc de Brabant*.

An unfortunate calamity at the quayside before these goods were loaded on to the boat resulted in their total destruction by fire. M. Douat put in a claim for £5,000, and produced invoices to show that the goods were worth at least twice as much. He might have got away with this but for an unfortunate oversight in the matter of detail. An insurance official nosing among the ruins found two barrels of tar, and

the débris of cases which close examination showed had contained resin, chips, alcohol, powder, and charcoal.

Spite of his protests, he was arrested, and during his trial he was identified as Vital Douat of Bordeaux, much wanted in France. After a lengthy trial he was found guilty, but the French Government asserted that they held a prior right to deal with him. The common-sense Dutchmen, who probably felt that they might as well be spared the expense of maintaining him in one of their own prisons, conceded the point, and Douat was sent on to Paris.

There Druscovitch, sent over to give evidence, saw for the first time the man against whose vivid ingenuity he had matched himself. The tale of the empty coffin was unfolded, and the legal advisers of the prisoner saw that the well-dressed young dandy of a detective had left no loophole by which their client could escape.

Douat was tried only for the fraud on the insurance company, and was condemned to a long period of penal servitude. The elusive Mme. Douat kept well out of the way, and of her no more was heard.

CHAPTER VI

MURDERERS' LUCK

When H. G. Julian walked out of the head office of the Mutual Life Insurance Company in New York with instructions that he was not to return until he could bring Dr. H. C. W. Meyer back with him, he did not immediately realise what he was up against. For Dr. Meyer had spent years in outwitting and eluding the cleverest detectives in the United States. And Julian was not even a detective. He was just an official of the insurance company, and the man he was looking for had fully a year's start. He might be anywhere on earth.

It all came about in this way. A Mr. Gustave Baum had insured his life in favour of his wife with four companies for a total of about £1,500. A month or two later he had died at a flat in East Thirteenth Street, New York, according to the certificate of a doctor of unimpeachable reputation, of "chronic dysentery."

Mrs. Baum, heavily draped in solemn black, and desolated with grief, started immediately after the funeral to collect the insurance money. Two companies paid without question ; a third raised some technical question. At the fourth the grief-stricken lady met with Mr. D. G. Gillette.

Mr. Gillette was a shrewd judge of men and things, who would have made an excellent barrister. He had been expecting this visit, and his emissaries had been

busy. He turned first to the man who accompanied the widow and demanded his name and address. The other explained that he was William Richter of Main Street, Cincinnati. His only interest in the case was as a friend of Mrs. Baum.

The lady answered Gillette's questions with the proper despondency of one who had suffered a great calamity. She signed the name of Amelia Baum, and said that she came from Denver, Colorado. "I only married my husband on February 11," she said tearfully, "and now I am a widow."

"So you're from Denver," said Gillette, toying absently with a pen. "You will know some of the people there?"

Mrs. Baum raised her head abruptly. "I—I can't remember," she stammered.

"No," he said coldly. "Perhaps you can tell me the name of a single street in Denver?"

She had paled slightly. Her lips opened, but she uttered no word. She shook her head.

The insurance official leaned over his desk. "Madam," he said. "You tell me that you were married on February 11, and this is April 6. Yet you will be a mother in a short time."

She leaned back in her chair gasping. "Take me away," she moaned to her companion.

But the relentless Gillette was not done. "This is a fraud," he said. "There has been a pretended death here, or there has been a murder committed." He fixed his eyes on the man. "We have made inquiries in Chicago. There we found the coat of a man named Brandt, and in the pockets were bills belonging to the notorious Dr. Meyer. Do you know Dr. Meyer, who

has swindled many insurance companies and has been twice tried for murder in Chicago?"

It is understandable that, after this, neither Mrs. Baum nor Mr. Richter returned to press their claim. All this time the alert Gillette had many suspicions but no evidence. After nearly three months he succeeded in getting authority for the exhumation of the dead man. There were then available people who immediately recognised the body as that of a ne'er-do-well from Chicago—the same Ludwig Brandt who had been mentioned by Gillette. The most eminent pathological experts and chemists in America were called in to decide the cause of death. They were quick to realise that poison had been used, but it took nearly a year to determine that Brandt had been killed by the deliberate administration of repeated doses of antimony and arsenic.

Then it was that Julian, Gillette's associate, was despatched on his man-hunting mission. Chicago struck him as a convenient jumping-off place. There he consulted the Pinkertons, and a portrait of Meyer found in the rogues' gallery of that agency put it beyond doubt that he was the man Richter who had accompanied "Mrs. Baum" to visit Gillette. From that point Julian, aided by the Pinkerton detectives, went fully into Meyer's past history.

I shall not give the exact sequence of his investigations on this phase, but the reader will grasp their effect if he will step back a year or so and consider a picturesque company then awaiting trial in the Cook County Gaol in the vicinity of Chicago. These were Carl Muller, a petty confidence trickster; Gustave Baum, a shiftless waster, who, nevertheless, was heir

to a large estate in Cologne; "Chicago Jack" Gardner, a professional thief; Ludwig Brandt, a weak and brainless swindler; and Meyer, a young doctor who was accused of forging the name of his father-in-law to an application for heavy life insurance.

Meyer had already shown himself to be possessed of utter ruthlessness, dexterity, audacity, and luck. Graduating from a Chicago medical school, he had set up in practice in the city. Shortly afterwards his wife died in suspicious circumstances. A little later he was arrested for the murder by poison of a wealthy grocer named Gelderman. He was acquitted, and thereupon married Mrs. Gelderman, who had inherited £6,000. Then his wife's son died after a strange illness. Meyer was again indicted for murder and again acquitted. Hard upon this his second wife fell ill. Suspecting mischief, she left, and began proceedings for divorce. As soon as a decree had been granted, Meyer married a pretty girl named Mary Dressen, the daughter of a rich, elderly German resident in Chicago. It was this man whose signature he had forged.

Dr. Meyer seems to have been optimistic as to the result of his trial—and it may be said that his optimism was justified in the result—for, according to the Chicago police, "Chicago Jack" and he concocted a scheme by which they were to insure Baum's life and then take him out in an open boat on Lake Michigan and ply him with whisky doctored with nitro-glycerine to produce symptoms similar to those of sunstroke. This scheme apparently fell through, and then Meyer suggested to Muller that the latter

should join him in operations against various insurance companies on their release.

Muller, about a year later, duly looked Meyer up, and, after some further persuasion, agreed to act under that dominating scoundrel's direction. One evening, while they were discussing the general methods to be adopted, a man Muller recognised as Ludwig Brandt appeared.

"That is the man who was in prison with us," Muller observed.

The doctor made some excuse to get rid of Brandt. "He may be useful to us," he observed significantly. "He will do anything I tell him to do. I maintain him, I care for him, I support him; he is no good to me."

This was no exaggeration. Brandt, though a strong man physically and by no means devoid of intellectual ability, was utterly without will-power or strength of character. Moreover, Mrs. Meyer had used her fascinations with effect. Brandt was infatuated with her, a fact of which she and her husband took full advantage.

Muller was a constant visitor at Meyer's house, but no definite scheme was formulated until an occasion arose when the former mentioned that Gustave Baum, who had served his term in Cook County Gaol and on his release had migrated to Cincinnati, was in trouble in connection with a forgery.

"I have been thinking of him," said Meyer. "I will go and see if I can get him out of the scrape. Meanwhile I will have Brandt insured in New York companies under the name of Gustav Baum. From Baum I will find out all about his birth and family

record. Then no insurance company will create trouble."

Meyer was not the sort of man to tell everything to his accomplice. His schemes went far beyond anything that Muller conceived, as will presently be apparent. He carried out his visit to Baum, but that unfortunate youth gained no advantage from it. He was left to serve his full term, and on his release he disappeared from human ken. One story had it that he died later in a Mexican prison; another said that he was taken by Meyer to Detroit, where he died of consumption. Efforts were later made to trace him, without success.

On his return to Chicago, Meyer told Muller that Baum was safely out of the way. "I am going to Germany to see his parents," he explained, "and I shall tell them that he committed murder in one of the Western States. I have learned that some day he will be possessed of fifty thousand pounds. I will work on the feelings of the family and tell them I have influence to get him released if they will pay me."

He and his wife actually sailed to Germany on this little blackmailing expedition. They failed dismally. The Baum family were proof against bluster or threats, and the Meyers were obliged to make a hasty and secret exit from the city to escape a criminal charge.

They were so impecunious when they reached New York that the man had to pawn his watch to raise their fares to Chicago. But he was fertile in resource. Once more Muller was called into conclave. Meyer, it appeared, before he had sailed to Germany had put into execution his plan of insuring Brandt as Baum. He had borrowed $70 to meet the first premiums

from "Chicago Jack," with whom he had afterwards quarrelled. His plan now was, so he said, to obtain a dead body from a hospital and palm it off as that of Baum. Mrs. Meyer was to go through a ceremony of marriage with Brandt as Baum, so she would be able to claim the insurance and would later be in a position to establish a claim on the Cologne estate.

One who was closely acquainted with the facts wrote:

"During the preparation for the execution of this artifice the conspirators had had rehearsals of the parts they were to play. Brandt was taught to feign excessive nausea, the poor fool being under the impression that that was his part of the play, and that when the time came for a corpse it would be provided. Mrs. Meyer is said to have exhibited considerable ability in her portrayal of typical widowhood, and in exemplifying her acting when, as the widow of Baum, she would appear before the insurance companies in the sombre habiliments of mourning."

The marriage of "Gustave Baum" to "Emilie Rather" was carried out. The policies were transferred to "Mrs. Baum," and all was ready for the next act. This was to take place in New York.

Muller and Brandt were sent on ahead to engage rooms. At this point Meyer thought that Muller could be trusted further, and gave him some preparations which were, in fact, poisons, and which Muller was to administer to his companion in small doses. Rooms were engaged at East Thirteenth Street, and there Meyer and his wife followed up their victim to see the thing through.

A doctor was called in and treated Brandt for

dysentery. What with the real torture he was undergoing and the coaching of Meyer, the dupe aided in the thorough deception of the doctor, little dreaming that he was a doomed man. He died within a few weeks, and a couple of days later was buried. Then the confederates sought the spoils, with the results that I have already narrated.

The unconcealed scepticism of Gillette thoroughly alarmed them. The furniture in the flat was sold for what it would fetch, such money as was in hand shared out, and they took to flight. Muller was ordered to go to Chicago. Meyer, who had grown a beard and long hair while in New York, shaved himself, had a hair cut, and adopted a different style of dress. Thus disguised, he returned to the neighbourhood of Chicago—not to his own house—and kept himself in rigorous hiding.

By the aid of Muller he sold the furniture of his home in Centre Street, and, with funds thus replenished, he and his wife went to Detroit. Thence they journeyed to South Bend, Indiana, to Cincinatti, and finally to Toledo, Ohio. In each of these places different *aliases* were used.

For a time these movements baffled Julian and his allies. "The mails were watched," he wrote, "and every dodge known to detectives was tried to entrap Meyer, but his long experience in crime made him familiar with the ways of detectives, and he did not communicate with any of his old cronies nor allow his wife to communicate with her relatives."

The amateur detective began to believe that Meyer was in Germany, and was about to follow clues in that direction when the strange case of Hugo Wayler

in Toledo attracted his attention by certain points of similarity to the Brandt poisoning.

Taking a chance, he dashed to Toledo, and within ten minutes of his arrival a photograph of Meyer had been identified as Wayler.

A factor of which the doctor's calculations had not taken account had disconcerted his plans. He had selected for his victim his wife's nursemaid, a girl named Mary Neiss, with whom, as it happened, Carl Muller was in love. This girl, whom he represented as his wife, had been insured with a Detroit company for £1,000. It chanced that Muller, who was passing under the name of Kirfel, visited Meyer. He noticed that the girl was sickly, learned that she had been insured, and guessed the rest. So he saved her life by eloping with her.

Meyer did not permit a little contretemps like this to baffle him. He engaged another girl from Indianapolis as a maid for his wife, killed her by poison, and put in an insurance claim. The company, however, noted that the body did not resemble the person insured, and again Meyer had to take to flight.

Julian handled the case from this point. He reported :

"To the police, who were hunting Meyer for this last crime, it did not occur that the unknown man who eloped with Mary Neiss might be an old crony of Meyer. I found that his description fitted the Carl Muller of New York, and I then located him by tracing Mary Neiss through her relatives. I then had him watched and surrounded by Pinkerton detectives, and I set up a law office in Chicago, and as a lawyer I was introduced to Muller. He finally told me of the

Toledo crime, but not a word of the New York crime, in which he was *particeps criminis.*"

In fact, Julian and his detectives took extreme care that Muller should get no hint of their real purpose. They knew that he had been an accomplice in the murder of Brandt, and that if he realised that he himself was in jeopardy he would become more closely on his guard than ever. It was hoped that through Muller they should be led to Meyer. But Meyer was laying very low; and certainly at this time Muller had no idea where he was.

One of the Pinkerton detectives was instructed to disguise himself and cultivate the acquaintance of Muller. So successfully did he play his rôle that Muller accepted him as an intimate companion. They spent many hours together, and the detective, you may be sure, kept his eyes and his ears very wide open. He was soon rewarded. At one of the old resorts which had been frequented by Meyer his associate received a letter.

Muller started as it was handed to him, and, with one glance at the writing on the envelope, thrust it in his pocket with an agitated oath. The detective perceived opportunity. There were other Pinkerton men at hand, and he passed them the word. The man with the unread letter in his pocket was carefully shepherded to Julian.

The insurance official determined, in his own words, "to put on the screws hard." He peremptorily demanded the letter, and, when Muller hesitated, revealed a close acquaintance with so many colourful portions of his career that the latter thought it wise to surrender.

There was little to be gleaned from the cautious wording of the unsigned letter. Says Julian: "I forced Muller to tell me all he knew, and to assist me by keeping up the correspondence with Meyer, under my direction. Muller could not tell from Meyer's letters where Meyer was, because the latter was careful to have them come indirectly and through other hands, and not even written or signed by him. Muller helped me under threat of punishment for other crimes, believing that I only wanted Meyer for the Toledo crime, and also because Meyer tried to poison the girl with whom he was in love, and did not divide the New York spoils fairly. Had Muller suspected that I was from New York, he would have told me nothing, being an accomplice of Meyer there, but would have avoided me."

The ductile and scared Muller served his purpose. The letters he received were traced from hand to hand, from point to point, until it became a matter of reasonable certainty that Meyer was located at, of all places, Detroit—Detroit, where the headquarters of the insurance company in which he had insured Mary Neiss were situated, where the papers had been full of the story of the poisoner Wayler. "It was the last place in the world that I should have thought of looking for him," confessed Julian.

Julian and the Pinkerton men moved on to Detroit and surveyed the situation. Meyer was, of course, under an *alias,* and they had to make sure that there was no mistake before they took action. They found that in the window of the house where he was living there was a card announcing apartments to let. Possibly Meyer merely wished to add a little to his income;

possibly there was a more sinister purpose behind this attempt to get other people to live with him. At any rate, the notice was adopted by Julian as an excuse for a reconnoitring expedition. With the Pinkerton men watching every outlet of the place he posed as a prospective lodger and knocked at the door. It was answered by Dr. Meyer himself.

Julian instantly recognised his man and made a signal. In a few moments the elusive murderer was under his arrest, and learned, to his astonishment, that the whole of the facts of the death of Brandt were known. He had imagined, so quietly had things been done, that since a year had elapsed the investigation of that crime had been dropped. The actual time spent by Julian in getting the evidence and running down his man had been in the neighbourhood of six weeks.

There was another man to whom the news of the arrest came as a shock. All along Muller had been under the impression that his share in the conspiracy against Brandt was unknown. He would not have worried unduly had his confederate and master been taken for the Toledo crime. It would have simplified things for him to see Meyer safely hanged for murder with which he had nothing to do. But the New York business was different. That touched him intimately. He realised that the ingenious Julian had been playing with him. The neighbourhood of Chicago had become particularly unhealthy. He stole swiftly and silently away to other parts.

He might have known Julian better. That gentleman had foreseen what would happen, and Muller never got out of the sight of the Pinkerton men, who,

at a word from Julian, plucked him from his hiding-place and took him to New York.

Meyer was extradited from Michigan and put on his trial in New York. It is regrettable, from the angle of abstract justice, to record that Muller did not take his place in the dock. The circumstances of the case were such that if the principal villain was to be convicted, his associate had to be used as State's evidence, and consequently could not be charged himself. For some reason, which it is harder to fathom, the bewitching and ruthless Mrs. Meyer was not indicted with her husband.

In fact, some uncanny freak of luck seemed to intervene on behalf of every one of the gang mixed up in the plot—not excepting Dr. Meyer himself. The investigations of Julian made it probable that although Meyer was only a year or two over thirty, he had poisoned seven persons, and that three others had escaped after they had been doomed by him. His first trial took place in December, 1893. It was wrecked by a dramatic incident. As counsel were delivering their concluding speeches, one of the jurors showed signs of obvious insanity. He was taken from the court to a lunatic asylum and a new trial ordered.

A second trial, which lasted for some weeks, took place some months afterwards. In his summing-up, the Judge observed that the evidence was plain, and that the crime was one of the most atrocious of which he had ever heard. He instructed the jury in strong terms to bring in a verdict of murder in the first degree.

The jury retired and spent many hours in arriving at a decision. There was, it appeared later, one man who would agree to nothing more severe than murder

in the second degree—a verdict which, under United States' law, did not carry with it capital punishment. So obstinate, so determined was this man that his colleagues yielded through sheer exhaustion.

So Meyer, three times tried for murder, escaped the gallows. He was awarded penal servitude for life.

CHAPTER VII

PUTTING FINGER-PRINTS ON THE MAP

YOU would never find Fred Fox worrying. There are men at Scotland Yard—for detectives are only human—who discover themselves keyed to a fierce, nervous tension when things go wrong. Fox was not one of these. He pursued his way evenly, equably, in all circumstances, and could eat a good dinner, drink a glass of beer, and tell a good story at the end of an exhausting day as if he had not a care in the world.

In his outward appearance and in casual conversation Fox might have been taken for a flourishing tradesman of genial and convivial turn of mind. Burly of body, ruddy of cheek, a perpetual twinkle in his eye, and with a rough bonhomie in his manner, you might have put him down at a glance as one of those inconsiderable nonentities with which every great city in the world is crowded. Which is just what he wanted to seem.

Behind this, however, was an alertness of mind and a strong analytical temperament that made him remarkable even among the group of remarkable men who were his associates while he was Chief Inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department. His record is notable for two reasons. He devised the principles by which the London Flying Squad of to-day, with its swift motor-cars and disguised detectives, has become a formidable menace to those rogues who have got the local detectives "taped"; and he put finger-prints on the map.

Do not misunderstand me. Fox was not an expert on finger-prints. He would have vigorously disclaimed any pretensions to be a "scientific" detective. But he handled the first murder mystery in which finger-prints figured, and so was indirectly responsible for impressing on the public mind that a new and dramatic factor in the detection and suppression of crime was in being. Up to that moment finger-prints had been suspected as a fad among people other than experts. It is interesting to remember that it is little more than twenty years ago since finger-prints came into their own.

Deptford is a poor-class, waterside district of London. In its narrow and winding High Street there was a tiny "oil and colour store" which was under the management of an elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. Farrow, who lived on the premises. They were a reserved pair, and, after the habit of local gossip in such localities, a reason was soon found for their reticence. It was rumoured that they were misers who had hoarded up an incalculable amount of money.

There were plenty of mean crooks in and about Deptford who could find matter for thought in this story, and it might be considered tolerably certain that, sooner or later, some of the more reckless spirits would be tempted to test its truth.

The thing happened. Some little time after seven o'clock one March morning—it was a Monday—a girl passing through the High Street saw the door of a shuttered door slowly open. An old bearded man, his head and face streaming with blood, looked out. He gazed up and down the street and then withdrew. The door closed. Now, there are slaughter-houses at

Deptford, and the appearance of men more or less bloodstained is not uncommon. The girl, at first startled, remembered this and for the time dismissed the matter from her mind.

At half-past eight, a boy who acted as a general factotum to the Farrows was dismayed to find that he could not get in, nor obtain any answer to his knocks. He sought assistance and an entrance was made. Old Farrow was lying face downward on the floor of the little shop-parlour in a pool of blood. He was quite dead. Upstairs on her bed was Mrs. Farrow, cruelly wounded about her head but still breathing. The police were called in and she was carried to a hospital. She died without recovering consciousness.

A telephone message brought the heads of the criminal investigation to the spot within an hour. There was tall, lanky Sir Melville Macnaghten, the Assistant-Commissioner, medical experts, and the serene Fred Fox. Already the divisional detectives were there. Fox now assumed control, and with unhurried precision began the investigation.

In some sense it was a clumsy crime, which was easy of reconstruction, which is not the same as saying that it was easy of detection.

Two black masks, made from an old stocking, had been thrown down in the room where the body of Farrow was found. Upstairs, under his bed, was a metal cash-box, open, and with its inner tray lying a little apart. Upon the smooth surface of the latter was the imprint of a man's thumb. During the course of the day it was learned that the cash-box had contained about nine pounds.

Two men, it was clear, had been concerned. From

the masks Fox drew the conclusion that they were local toughs who had been afraid of recognition. They had forced an entry by the front door, and in doing so had alarmed old Farrow, who, half dressed, had descended to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. Then he had been attacked and beaten into unconsciousness. Immediately afterward the murderers had rushed upstairs to silence Mrs. Farrow. A trail of blood from the shop-parlour to the front door puzzled the detectives for a while. Only after they had heard the story of the girl who had seen Farrow look up and down the street in the early morning were they able to understand how it had been caused. Farrow must have regained consciousness after the departure of his assailants and staggered to the door, where he looked helplessly down the street unable to frame a cry for aid. He had returned to the parlour, sat himself on a chair, and presently toppled over to the floor to die. An indication of the haste of the assassins was shown by a silver coin which they had dropped a yard from the cash-box and not stayed to pick up.

The tray of the cash-box, of course, interested Fox. He handled it gingerly with pieces of tissue paper and studied the blurred thumb-print closely. Even now, at this date, there is a confused idea in the public mind that a finger-print is helpful in tracing a murderer. This is true only in part. A finger-print does not help unless the police already have a similar print with which to compare it. Now, Scotland Yard only keeps the prints of persons who have been convicted. It has no magical process by which the mere discovery of a finger-print enables it to divine a murderer. A finger-print found at the scene of a crime is of high importance

—but its chief value is to corroborate the identity of a suspect after, and not before, he is run down.

Therefore, Fox did not hold any great hope of catching the murderer through the thumb-print ; but he did hope that it would go to prove his guilt. He demanded if anyone had touched the box, and with some nervousness a young detective-sergeant admitted that he had moved it a trifle so that it would not be kicked by the ambulance-bearers when Mrs. Farrow was removed. Detectives had not, as yet, been educated to meticulous care in the preservation of finger-prints. Fox patted his subordinate on the back, told him that it was quite all right, but ordered him to go to the Yard to have his finger-prints taken. The cash-box was also sent to the finger-print department, where the enthusiastic Superintendent (then Inspector) Collins put it under a meticulous scientific scrutiny.

The masks, which it had been hoped would prove a promising clue, did not, in fact, help at first. They were shown to have been hastily cut from an old pair of Mrs. Farrow's stockings—proof in itself that the murderers had feared recognition by their victims. It was, therefore, necessary to fall back on those less dramatic avenues of detection that are the real backbone of all criminal investigation methods. This meant looking up all those crooks and semi-crooks in the neighbourhood who might have had the knowledge or the experience to take part in the robbery.

A first step was the discovery of a milkman, who at about seven o'clock on the morning of the murder had seen two rough-looking young men emerge from the Farrows' shop. These two men had also been seen a little later by a girl who was on her way to work. They

were then running along the High Street. From these people descriptions were obtained, and if it was really the murderers whom they had seen Fox knew that he had to seek for two young men, one of whom wore brown boots and a brown coat.

There were the usual false trails. Twice Fox and his assistants pounced on suspects. One of these was dragged from his bed at a lodging-house in central London, but he was able to prove an alibi within an hour. Another man was caught at Greenwich. He was able to show that he had nothing to do with the crime. Then the hunt settled down. Fox, Hailstone, the divisional detective inspector, and their men set out to rake Deptford and the neighbouring districts for men who might be concerned.

It looked like being a long and tedious job. Fox's cheerfulness was not shared by those in high authority, who knew as well as he did that the beat-up was in the nature of a forlorn hope. But luck, which has a habit of sitting on the shoulders of the good detective, was with the hunters. Billy Gall, a local detective, was assigned to make some inquiries about a pair of young scallawags named Stratton. There was no particular suspicion about these men. Their movements about the time of the crime were being looked into in common with those of scores of others. Thus it was not altogether accident that brought Gall to an encounter with a girl called Annie Cromarty, whom he knew to be on intimate terms with one of the brothers.

"Hello, Annie," said Gall genially, "where did you get that eye?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "Where 'dja fink?" she demanded. "It's abaht the o'ny fing Alf

ever gives away. That's wot I git for asking for something to eat—blast him."

"Hungry, are you?" observed Gall, who thought he perceived signs that Annie was in the mood to tell of her wrongs. "Here, come along with me. I'll blow you to a feed."

He took her to a neighbouring coffee shop, and while she ate she talked with bitterness of her life with Alfred Stratton. The discreet officer did little more than keep the conversation going. But he noticed that she spoke in general terms. She was very cautious not to touch on the delicate subject of Alfred Stratton's recent doings. When she had finished her meal he suggested that he should take her to have a chat with a friend of his, who might be able to do something for her. "Sure. You're a good sort, Bill," she agreed.

That friend was Fred Fox. He also knew an angry woman when he saw one, and he handled her tactfully. She was enthusiastic on the subject of her wrongs. She only perceived where she was being led when she had said just a little too much. Then she became panic-stricken. "I ain't a-goin' to say nothin' to hurt Alf," she declared. "I ain't a-goin' to answer any questions."

The Chief Detective-Inspector laid a hand on her shoulder. "Look here, Annie," he said. "We know a lot more than you think. We want to do the fair thing by you. If Alf and his brother had anything to do with the murder, you don't want to get mixed up in it. We don't want to have to rope you in as an accessory. You know what an accessory means, don't you? Now you be a good girl."

Thus by persuasion, backed by a menace only dimly

appreciated by the girl, he drew from her a story of vital consequence. She had been living with Alfred Stratton at various places, and they were then staying in one room in Brockwell Street, Stratford. Alfred had kept her short of money and knocked her about "something shameful." Fox dropped a quiet question and brought her to recent events. The black eye had been given after a few words late on Sunday night. She and Alfred had afterwards gone to sleep, when they were awakened by a tap on the window—their room was on the ground floor. This she knew to be a signal of Alfred's younger brother, who had a lodging in the neighbourhood. The girl pretended to sleep, and as Alfred slipped from the bed and stealthily lifted the window she heard a whispered question, "Shall we go out to-night?"

The answer she did not catch, but Alfred dressed, slipped out through the window, and the two disappeared.

Alfred returned at about nine in the morning. She looked at him in astonishment. "Lumme, if you ain't had a bath."

"Can't I have a blinking bath if I like," he retorted sullenly.

"Yus," she agreed. "You can find money for a bath when I ain't got none fer food."

Alfred grunted. "I got yer grub," he said, depositing sundry small packages on the table. "Now mind yer. If anyone asks where I slep' last night, you tell 'em I was at home—see."

An hour or two after this the news of the murder became known. Whatever the girl's misgivings, they did not apparently become acute for a while. It is diffi-

cult for anyone to realise that a person known intimately may be a murderer. Only when the descriptions of the wanted men were published did it occur to her that one of them might apply to Alfred.

"Isn't that like you?" she said, reading it out.

"Do you think I'd do a thing like that?" he sneered. "Look how well I am known. How could I walk about afterward?"

Later Annie saw him using blacking on his new brown boots. And a brown coat, which he had been in the habit of wearing, had disappeared. He explained that he had given it away.

There was another day when she was out walking with Alfred. Near a fence bordering some waterworks he tore loose a sod of earth, and, taking out a few handfuls of soil, inspected something that had been buried. To her surprised question he declared it a hide-out, where he had put by some money—"a matter of four quid"—with which he intended to marry her.

She guided Fox to the place where Alfred had dug. Burrowing at the spot, the detective found the £4—also an electric torch and a couple of mufflers.

All this, of course, was not extracted from Annie at the same time. It was pieced together from disjointed replies to close questioning made in the course of several interviews. And Fox was far too wary to accept the story of an angry woman without test. Her reluctance to talk might be feigned. The whole thing might be a concoction for the purpose of putting Alfred Stratton "in bad." No one really believed this—but it had to be considered.

The girl was told to go home and keep her mouth shut. The investigation began to develop and her story

held together—rather there was nothing to knock it to pieces. The younger brother, Albert Stratton, had vanished. *Cherchez la femme* was the motto adopted in his case also, and his inamorata, one Kate Wade, was questioned. Under a little pressure she admitted that there had been times when he took nocturnal excursions. Albert was found to have had a room in Knott Street, and the landlady was induced to recall an occasion when he had left in her charge a heavy bundle at the contents of which she had peeped. It had contained clothing and silver plate. After his departure she had found in his room three pieces of a stocking roughly fashioned into masks. These she had thrown away, but from her description Fox was convinced that they were masks of a similar type to those found at the scene of the crime.

All this was black, but the evidence as yet was far from being conclusive. Fox began to look for something that would bring proof closer home. Meanwhile, he decided to allow Alfred Stratton an ample allowance of rope. Sooner or later he was convinced that the brothers would come together again unless any move was taken to alarm them. On this part of the investigation the chief detective-inspector became a trifle over-subtle. He had picked up a great deal about the habits of the two men, and, among other things, he learned that they made a point of attending the big football matches in the neighbourhood of London. That practice, he felt, would enable him to gather them in at his convenience. To avoid any hint of his activities coming to their ears, he issued an order that Alfred was to be left severely alone. There was to be nothing in the nature of strict observation or shadowing.

The biggest football event of the year—a Cup Final—was to take place at the Crystal Palace the following Saturday. Fox had his men posted at every gate of the ground. As the great crowds began to gather Fox waited in momentary expectation of a report that his birds were within the net. But nothing happened. A search of the cheaper seats made it certain that his calculations had been thrown out. With misgivings at his heart, he slipped back to Deptford to inquire for Alfred. There it turned out that Alfred had not been seen at his lodgings since the previous day. Fox made no sign, but he became a little worried. It might be coincidence, but he feared it was not. He left men on the watch and waited impatiently for the morning.

The dawn of Sunday brought no news of either of the brothers. Fox now saw his mistake. Instructions were broadcast over London that either Alfred or Albert Stratton were to be arrested for wilful murder wherever they were found. A red-hot and determined search was put in hand.

Toward the end of a tiring day Detective-Inspector Hailstone was walking back to the police-station to report that he had drawn blank when he met an acquaintance of Alfred Stratton's. He flung out a casual inquiry. "Why, I've just left Alf down at a little pub in Evelyn Street," said the other, all unaware that the man was being sought for murder.

Hailstone hurried away, and within a quarter of an hour he elbowed his way through a crowd of waterside nondescripts to the bar where Alfred was standing. "I want you, Alf," he said, in a quiet undertone. "Come outside."

There are few among the biggest toughs in London

who would care to disregard such an invitation from a detective. Alfred obediently preceded the other out. He was very pale, and his hands shook.

"What's the game?" he demanded when they were alone. "What are you taking me for?"

The inspector had a hand on his wrist. "You'll be charged with murder," he replied. "Better not say anything now. Come along."

Not until next day did Fox find Albert in a common lodging-house in another part of London. Leaving the two brothers under lock and key, he sought an interview with the Director of Public Prosecutions. That official was inclined to be pessimistic. He thought that the evidence in hand was very thin for a case of murder. However, he agreed to instruct counsel to ask the magistrate for a remand for a week. If within that time the evidence was not strengthened it was quite likely that the case would come to an abrupt end. To the finger-print on the cash-box he attached little importance.

So the men were brought up before the magistrate —both very boisterous and impudent—and put back in prison for a week. Fox went down to see that their finger-prints were taken. They laughed as they submitted to the operation—crooks had not yet appreciated the formidable menace of the system—and sneered at Fox as he carried the records away.

Back, fast as a cab could take him, went Fox to Scotland Yard, and handed the prints over to Collins. The big enlarging camera was brought into service, and in a little while the specialist was deep in a comparison of loops and whorls and laterals with the thumb-print on the cash-box. Collins is not a nervous man, but

this was the first big test of the finger-print system, and his hands shook as he eliminated all but one of the prints—that of the right thumb of Alfred Stratton's hand. To his trained eye there were superficial resemblances in this, but he was not certain that it would stand the closer tests. To exclude the possibility of discredit being thrown upon the system, a rigorous regulation had been laid down—it exists to this day—that no finger-print should be presented in court as evidence unless there were at least ten points of resemblance. This gave a generous margin of absolute certainty.

One by one Collins checked his points, his excitement rising with the total. Presently he burst without knocking into the sacred precincts of the Assistant-Commissioner's room, where Fox and Sir Melville Macnaghten were awaiting his report. "Good God, sir!" he gasped. "The mark on the cash-box tray is in exact correspondence with Alfred Stratton's right thumb." To be precise, there were just eleven points of resemblance.

Fox breathed heavily. He felt that, whatever happened now, he was justified. Nevertheless, he considered that it would be unwise to pin the case entirely to this point. Juries are kittle-cattle, and they might be disinclined to hang two men on the mere statement that the finger-print system was infallible. So he attempted to bring the thing closer home. There were disappointments. Annie, the girl who had provided the first clue to the Strattons, had a sudden failure of memory, and went back on her evidence. She was, in fact, treated as a hostile witness at the Old Bailey. The milkman who had seen the two men leave the

Farrows' shop on the morning of the murder failed to identify the brothers. On the other hand, they were identified by a man and a woman who had seen them in different parts of the points about the neighbourhood in the small hours of the fatal day. The girl who had seen them running along the High Street also recognised them. There was plenty of evidence to show that they were in the habit of being out all night. With all their energy and persistence, the detectives could find little more that counted.

Then suddenly Albert Stratton helped. He was incautious enough to fall into conversation with a gaoler.

"How do you think I'll get on?" he asked.

"I don't know," returned the cautious officer.

"I reckon he'll get strung up," said Albert unemotionally, jerking his thumb toward the cell where his brother was confined, "and I'll get about ten years. He led me into this."

The admission was almost as vital as the finger-print. The two things combined with the other fragments of evidence to make a crushing case.

The two men were put on trial, and in one sense it was a trial of the finger-print system. Detective-Inspector Collins figured prominently as a witness, and, with the aid of a big chart, gave a lecture on his methods to the court. A practical demonstration was made by taking the finger-prints of some of the jury. The expert remained unshaken in cross-examination.

The defence was an alibi and an attack on the finger-print system, which was easily shattered. The judge, in his charge to the jury, went out of his way

to insist that the thumb-print should not be taken as infallible evidence.

When the jury retired, the Scotland Yard men awaited the result with more anxiety than is usual even in a case of murder. They knew the verdict would have incalculable consequences one way or the other on scientific criminal investigation.

It was two hours before the jury made up their minds. They found both men guilty. Finger-prints were on the map !

CHAPTER VIII

M. GORON PLAYS A TRUMP

As the efficiency of an army in the field depends upon its transport, so the efficiency of every detective bureau in the world must at its root depend upon the question of identification. It is a trite observation that no man can be proved guilty of anything until a point of contact between crime and criminal has been shown, but it will bear repeating.

Science has done wonders in simplifying some phases of the work of the detective. Incontrovertible conclusions have been drawn from a hair, a bloodstain, a spot of dust. But, when all is said and done, this sort of thing is exceptional. It does not arise in day-to-day police work. On the other hand, the problem of identification of offenders is with the detective always. Systems by which this should become a more or less automatic process have been sought for generations. In that effort three methods have been devised—Bertillonage, the finger-print system, and the "Modus Operandi" system. One may almost disregard the "Modus Operandi" system, for its essentials have been well understood ever since detectives existed, and long before any written formula had been laid down.

The first scientific and systematised blow at the regular criminal was struck by a young French doctor, Alphonse Bertillon, who realised the weakness and the looseness of the average police descriptions of

criminals. He worked out a scheme of identification by anthropometric measurements based on the principle that certain parts of the adult human body never change, and that thus the identification of an individual could be made with precision. He became Chief of the Judicial Identification Service of France, but, in spite of the cleverness of his system, when he died in 1914 it had been almost entirely superseded throughout the world by the much simpler and more certain finger-print system initiated by Sir Edward Henry of Scotland Yard. There is a subtle irony in the belief, still held by many people, that Bertillon invented the finger-print system, in which he, in fact, at first disbelieved.

These preliminary observations are necessary because the events I am about to recite occurred in the nineties, when Bertillonage had the field to itself and was a process that had struck the public imagination.

Monsieur M. F. Goron was then at the head of the Paris Detective Service. Goron was a type of detective who combined a number of qualities not usual in one man—a student with artistic and literary tastes, yet a shrewd, experienced man of the world, of immense self-possession, and with charming manners and a fund of sly humour. He was also a man of imagination, as will duly appear. Of the many great detectives produced by France, few could show a record of more consistent success than he.

One of those queer coincidences that sometimes affect the detective business begins this story. Goron had been asked by the Belgian Government to try and lay hands on a smooth swindler, one Karslake,

who had taken refuge in the French capital. The Chief of the Detective Service at once had his men locate all those persons who were known to have had dealings with Karslake, and one by one they were requested to call upon him. Among them was a M. Charles Vernet, a gentleman well and favourably known on the Paris Bourse, of considerable wealth and important social connections. This man, with his suave yet businesslike manners, was quite willing to assist the police. He answered questions readily and even ventured some suggestions of his own which were full of common sense. But, while they were talking, Goron, beneath his urbane mask, was studying his visitor's face while he struggled with some elusive hint of memory which he could not bring to a clear focus. Vernet spoke and behaved as a stranger. There was nothing in his attitude or manner to awaken suspicion. Yet the detective was convinced that at some previous time he had known this man. There was a ragged uncertainty in his mind, but, spur his recollection as he would, he could not bring it to an issue.

With the ingrained caution of his profession, he permitted nothing of this to show in his demeanour. When they shook hands and said good-bye, the jovial financier was entirely unconscious of anything unusual.

A less imaginative or less pertinacious man might have dismissed further speculation based on a vague and uncertain impression. Not so Goron. The following day he called upon the police commissary of the district in which Vernet lived, and dropped a casual question. The district official smiled at the ignorance of the other. Not know M. Vernet? Why, M. Vernet

was one of the big figures of finance. He had the entrée everywhere. It was ten years since he had taken up his residence in Paris, having made an immense fortune abroad, which he had at least doubled since by his operations on the Bourse.

The conversation turned upon some other subject, and Goron returned to his office. The more he considered the matter, the more sure did he become that he had met Vernet previously—in different circumstances and under another name. He was obsessed by a determination that with every means at his disposal he would find an explanation.

He searched all the records since he had become Chief of the Detective Service in the endeavour to find a key that would unlock his memory. His labour was wasted. He drew blank. Then he began to look up the cases with which he had been associated in the earlier days of his police career. Thus his attention at last concentrated on an episode that had occurred while he was the police commissary of the Pantin Quarter some twelve years before.

A lawyer's young clerk named Moulin, who had lodgings in the Rue des Abbesses, had been stabbed to the heart after a fierce struggle. Awakened by the sound of the fight, a lodger on the floor below sprang to his door and flung it open in time to see an agitated man hurrying down the stairs. The following day a man named Simon, an acquaintance of Moulin's, was arrested and was identified as the figure that had been seen on the stairs. Simon was known to have been concerned in several doubtful affairs and to be a man of small scruple. Spite of his strenuous denials, he was charged with the murder, but the evidence

was purely circumstantial, and he evaded the guillotine at the cost of a sentence of twenty years at the French penal settlement at Cayenne.

Now, unless he had been deceived by some remarkable resemblance, Goron felt that he had put his finger on Vernet's secret. He decided that Vernet was Simon—and yet Simon should still be languishing beneath the blistering suns of Cayenne. The riddle had taken another angle, but there was all the more reason why it should be solved.

Goron examined the dossier of the convict Simon at the Prefecture of Police. At once a new complication confronted him. True enough, as he had surmised, Simon had escaped from Cayenne at some time before M. Vernet had returned to Paris. But he had not escaped alone. He had been accompanied by a fellow-convict named Aymard in his dash for freedom, and by the records it was Aymard alone who had won free. The pursuers recovered the body of Simon from a ditch. That is to say, such indications as there were pointed to it being the body of Simon. There were wounds on the body which told of a ferocious struggle, and the face was battered beyond recognition. It was the jacket of his prison uniform, which bore the number 94, that induced the prison authorities to believe the body that of Simon. Aymard had never been recaptured.

There was no doubt that, officially, Simon was dead. It might have seemed that this would clinch the matter. So, from one point of view, it did. It convinced Goron that he was right—that Simon and Vernet were one and the same person. He reasoned that in all probability the body which had been found

was that of Aymard. The two men had been much alike in build, and it was likely that the evidence of the number on the jacket had been accepted without question. So resourceful a man as Simon might well consider the murder of a fellow-prisoner a small price to pay to deflect the hue and cry. The astute Goron remembered that the trick had been tried before.

All the same, Simon was officially dead. That meant that Goron had to step warily lest he become entangled in a complication of red tape. Neither his colleagues in the police nor the prison authorities would care to admit—except under stress of the plainest proof—that the records were mistaken. Certainly they would not be inclined to assist in showing that they had bungled. It was just possible that Simon was really dead and that he was diving headlong into a mare's nest. The detective was human enough to wish to avoid any chance of incurring the ridicule that would overwhelm him in such an event.

The situation was distinctly delicate. Everything was supposition. Had Vernet not been a man of wealth and with influential friends, it is possible that Goron, trained in French police methods as he was, would have taken a chance and tried to bluff the matter through straight away. As it was, he had to use finesse to substantiate his theory. A close study of Simon's history disclosed that, while being tried for the murder of Moulin, Simon had tried to ingratiate himself with the police by turning informer in regard to a burglary. He implicated a young fellow who called himself Berger, and who was promptly hunted up and put under arrest. At the trial it was shown that

Berger had been duped by other and older men in carrying out the robbery, and he was given a light sentence.

Here was a man who—if he could be found—might set the question at rest. Berger knew that he had been betrayed by Simon. Human nature being what it is, Goron felt that there would be little difficulty in inducing the ex-burglar to an exquisite revenge on the traitor.

But where was Berger? Twelve years is a long time. Berger might be dead; he might be at the ends of the earth; he might have changed his name and be living in an obscurity that would take months to penetrate.

This is an instance of the manner in which a detective is sometimes thrust aside from the main object of his quest on a path that becomes an investigation within an investigation. There was an old photograph of Berger. Beyond this all that there was to help Goron was the knowledge that in his early days Berger had been among those who had striven to win the heart of Mme. Samson, a widow who kept a tobacconist's shop in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arts in the Latin quarter. The obvious student appellation had been bestowed on her, and she had been nicknamed Delilah.

The odds were long against finding Delilah at her old resort. Nevertheless, Goron went there to pick up what he could. The tobacco shop still existed, but Delilah no longer presided over its destinies. Instead there reigned a gossiping little creature who was quite willing to spend a quarter of an hour in chatting with the suave and well-mannered stranger who seemed to

have time to waste after he had bought cigarettes. Goron smoked steadily, with no attempt to stem the current of her loquacity as she told in detail of the trials and triumphs, the faults and virtues of her friends and relations. When she paused for breath he nonchalantly mentioned the name of Delilah.

"You know her?" she asked aggressively.

Goron grasped that Delilah was *persona non grata*. He shook his head in quick disclaimer. "Oh no. I saw her once or twice years ago. She was engaged to marry a young fellow—I can't recall his name."

The tobacconist, her hands on her hips, regarded him scornfully. "That woman! Who would be fool enough to become engaged to her?"

"I fancied," said the detective meekly, "that I heard she was going to marry a man named Burger, or Berger—something like that."

"Berger, you mean. Berger was the name. A gaol-bird."

"Yes," agreed Goron. "There was some trouble. What became of him?"

The woman reflected. "I have an idea that when he came out of prison he took up photography. When I last heard of him he was in Belleville. That was a good many years ago."

Goron had heard enough. The district of Belleville was a big one, but if Berger was still there he had to be found. At that time Belleville was one of those places to which it was the custom of the working folk of Paris to resort to celebrate a marriage. Naturally no wedding is complete without a feast, and, as a result, many of the restaurants of the quarter were from day to day well patronised by wedding parties.

Equally indispensable to any well-conducted wedding is a photograph of the principals and the guests. On these facts the detective considered that the best point from which to start would be the restaurants. He was sure to find photographers there.

Luck served him. In the garden of the biggest restaurant of the neighbourhood a photographer and his assistant were busy. A waiter informed the detective that the photographer was one Masson. This did not help much. The assistant passed and Goron stopped him. "Do you happen to know a photographer named Berger?" he asked.

The other gaped. "Yes," he returned. "I am Berger."

It was one of those flukes which at times smooth the way of the police officer. "I want a word with you when you are not busy," said Goron, and the assistant went on with his work.

When he had finished Goron thrust a card into his hand. Berger mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. "What do you want with me?" he demanded in some agitation. "I have done nothing wrong. I have earned my living honestly since that—that affair."

The detective reassured him. "Don't be alarmed. It is nothing to do with your past. I want to ask you something. Can you call on me at half-past ten in the morning?"

With a breath of relief Berger agreed. Goron returned to his office and concocted a note to Vernet asking him to call at eleven the next morning to settle a few points which had arisen in the case of Karslake. With all the punctuality of a good business man, Vernet kept the appointment. He waved aside Goron's

apologies. It was a public duty to assist the police, and he was only too happy to be of service. He probably wondered at the triviality of the questions that were put to him, but, having answered them, went about his business.

As he left, Goron flung open a door. "Well, Berger," he asked, "do you know that gentleman?"

The photographer drew a deep breath. "I am not sure," he answered doubtfully. "There is something about him which reminds me of Simon. Yet he is quite different in appearance. There is a trick of manner—the way he holds himself—I cannot exactly explain. But I am not certain."

This was disappointing, but half a loaf is better than no bread. In degree, the theory of Goron had been confirmed, but Berger's evidence would be rather worse than nothing at all if he could not swear to the man. So the photographer was allowed to depart, having given a pledge of secrecy. Goron set his resourceful brain to evolve some other way. A scheme which had that touch of the dramatic which Anglo-Saxon detectives scorn, but in which their French confrères take delight, occurred to him.

Vernet went much into society. Through a friend Goron arranged that the financier should be invited to a reception given by a distinguished lady sculptor at which all the leading literary, artistic and scientific lions of Paris were to be present. He also arranged to secure an invitation for his "nephew"—who, as a matter of fact, was a smart, well-dressed detective officer, on whom Goron felt that he could place implicit reliance.

The stage was well set on the evening. Goron him-

self arrived early with his nephew, the latter carrying a brown paper parcel, which was put in a place of safety till it was wanted. Vernet, in resplendent evening dress, bowed amiably to the detective, and turned his attention to a demonstration of the then new cinematograph, which was one of the attractions of the evening. A somewhat duller show was given by a grey-haired scientist with an electrometer. Then the hostess called on Goron to add entertainment and instruction to the function.

The detective chief took the centre of the room and made a little speech, dwelling on the evolution of criminal investigation. "Years ago," he said, "the man whose duty it is to fight the enemies of society had his own powers to rely upon. Between him and the criminal it was skill against skill, art against art. Then came the modern inventions—railways, steamers, the telegraph, the telephone—and matters grew worse for the detective. Alas! it was the murderers, the forgers, who had the advantage, inasmuch as they could steal a long march upon Nemesis, and get their accomplices to use the telegraph and the telephone for their benefit.

"The question, therefore, was to discover a system by which society and not its foes would reap the advantages. Ladies and gentlemen, this system has been found, and the man to whom we owe it, and whose name will go down to posterity, is M. Bertillon."

Goron fumbled with a package which his nephew had handed to him. This, he explained, contained the instruments used in the new science "for the identification of those who, having previously fallen into the hands of the police, expect to escape detection by

changing their names or altering, as they think, their appearance."

An excited rush of women and men proclaimed the interest that this new form of drawing-room entertainment had awakened, when Goron offered to demonstrate how Bertillon measurements were taken. Several ladies passed through his hands, and Alphonse Daudet was among the first of a string of distinguished men to submit. In the midst of his operations Goron, unobtrusively alert, saw Vernet moving to the door.

"Ah, there's M. Vernet," he cried. "Don't go away. Come and be measured."

The financier paused and shook his head with a smile. "No, thank you," he declined. "I have seen the thing done before."

Goron made a laughing appeal to two American girls who were among the visitors. "Catch him, ladies. Don't let him escape."

By this time all eyes were on Vernet, and he submitted himself with what grace he could to the fair Americans. "This is a bad joke," he told Goron.

"Oh, it's part of the fun," returned the other carelessly.

Whether Vernet suspected anything or not he had now to go through with it. He shrugged his shoulders and, with apparent nonchalance, allowed his measurements to be taken. Goron had taken the precaution to have a card already prepared. It was this that was given to the financier as a souvenir, while the card on which the true figures had been recorded was quietly slipped to the Chief of the Sûreté by his "nephew."

An excuse was made to conclude the demonstration, and Goron withdrew himself to compare the measure-

ments with those of the "dead" convict Simon. He nodded complacently as he slipped both cards back to his pocket, and sought Vernet in the smoking-room. He spoke to the other in a stern undertone.

"I advise you not to make a scene. I know you to be Simon, an escaped convict, and the suspected murderer of Aymard. You will have to come with me. My 'nephew' over there is a detective, and I have three others within call. Say good-bye to your hostess and follow me."

The cigar which Vernet held in his hand quivered a little. But his nerve did not fail him. "This is a mistake, which I will make you regret," he threatened icily. "But I will do as you say."

He maintained this attitude of composed resentment until M. Bertillon himself had put beyond doubt the conclusions of Goron. Then he broke down. While his large circle of acquaintances was still wondering why and where he had so suddenly disappeared, he was sent to prison to await the departure of a boat to Cayenne, where he would have to be tried. Here he anticipated the fate that he probably felt was inevitable. On the day before he was to be transferred to the ship he was found dead in his cell.

He had hanged himself.

CHAPTER IX

THE ENGRAVED WATCH

THERE are moments when even detective-inspectors are moved to ironical and bitter laughter. This, naturally, is not in public, where they maintain a mask of dignified imperturbability, but it does happen within the four walls of Scotland Yard. For no man knows better than your detective that he cannot perform miracles, although he does not in the least object to the persistent belief of the layman that he can. There are tricks in every trade, and mysterious effects may be produced by detectives, as by conjurers, that are susceptible of very simple explanation. It is when brethren of the craft ask for impossibilities that the soul of the detective surges with peevish wrath.

So it was that Detective-Inspector Maurice Moser waxed indignant and almost mutinous when he was informed by old Jack Shore, then the executive head of the Criminal Investigation Department, that he and Frank Froest had been chosen to search for a certain Continental murderer, who was supposed to have taken refuge in England. The point was that the crime had taken place in a remote Westphalian forest three months before. The German police had no hint of the identity of the murderer. They believed that he had fled to England, and, with a complimentary but embarrassing faith, they asked Scotland Yard to find him.

Moser was a good detective, but the thing seemed to him simple futility. "Where can I begin?" he pro-

tested. "There are no details—nothing to work on. How can I find a man I don't know for a crime that I know practically nothing about, except that it was committed in Germany three months ago?"

The grim old superintendent hid his sympathy with this point of view beneath elaborately polite sarcasm. "There are the papers, Mr. Moser. You are paid to do your job. Turn round three times and see whom you can catch." He became abruptly immersed in other matters, and Moser, seeking Froest, took the chair at a private indignation meeting, which passed informal resolutions of damnation on the German police and their methods. However, there was nothing for it, and the papers were studied with care.

The victim of the crime was a gamekeeper, who had been shot at a lonely spot in a dense forest in a district called Kleningberg. Some time elapsed before the body had been discovered—the doctors asserted that the man had been dead at least fourteen days—and there were the marks of a fierce struggle in the vicinity, as though the wounded man had closed with his assailant before, weakened by his injury, he had sunk down to die. Two bullets were found in his body, which showed the murderous resolution of his assailant. An old-fashioned silver watch with the head of a dachshund engraved upon the case was missing, as also was the dead man's cartridge belt. The money he had in his pockets had not been touched, so that the theory of murder for robbery was discounted. The Westphalian detectives had studied footprints and raked the country with admirable patience and industry, but no result. They could not indicate, however indefinitely, a single person against whom suspicion pointed. But,

somehow, after many weeks, they had reached a conclusion, on very vague grounds, that the murderer had sailed from Hamburg for England. Nor did Moser's imploring requests for more data yield him anything farther than an emphatic statement that every particle of information had been passed on to Scotland Yard.

Helplessly, therefore, Moser and Froest began their quest. From Hamburg boats sail for many ports in England. Thousands of Germans passed to and fro between the two countries in the course of three months. The Hamburg police and port authorities met inquiries with an apathy not altogether to be wondered at in the circumstances. Moser saw no hope of picking up a clue there.

Conscious that he was exposing himself to the blunt wit of his provincial confrères, he sent a formal circular note round to the police of every port, giving the scanty details of the crime, and asking that questions should be pressed in shipping offices and other likely places as to the arrival at any time in the past three months of a provincial German. As he expected, the official replies were accompanied by pungent unofficial comments.

"It is a great pity," wrote one official, "that Scotland Yard has nothing better to do than to despatch conundrums all over the country." Another observed that the circular had obviously been misdated—it must have been sent out on April 1. A third asked whether the Yard thought that they put all provincial Germans arriving at their port into cages for months until they were claimed by someone. Others were indignant that they should be asked to waste their time. Moser "docketed" the case. He could go no further.

Three weeks elapsed, and a communication came

from Hull on which the detectives decided to take action. They travelled down to the port, and the local men put them in touch with a widow who kept a lodging-house. This lady had numbered recently among her boarders "a strange, foreign gentleman," and she remembered that she had seen him with a big, silver, engraved watch of a peculiar kind. The man had left, and she could not say where he had gone. It was a line that looked encouraging, and Moser and Froest followed it up with enthusiasm. Days were spent in locating the "strange, foreign gentleman." At last he was found employed as a labourer on the dock extension works, and, with the precautions necessary in the arrest of a desperate murderer, the two officers approached him.

He was an upstanding giant, well over six feet tall, and at their stealthy advance his suspicions took light. He straightened himself up with his spade held threateningly above his head, and in a rich Irish brogue declared that he knew their game, and if they came any nearer he would do for them. Moser looked at Froest, and Froest looked at Moser. They burst into a shout of laughter, in which there was perhaps a little touch of chagrin. Obviously, this was the man the lodging-house keeper had described; equally obvious was it that this illiterate Irish labourer was not a German murderer. They explained the situation, and the Irishman, who proved to be fresh from the wilds of some Connaught village, offered them a friendly "chew" from his engraved metal tobacco-box, which was secured to his belt by a thick brass chain. This was what the landlady had thought to be an engraved watch.

The fiasco damped their spirits a little ; but, as Hull was as likely a place as any other in which to find the murderer, they decided to investigate a little more before returning to London. It was a remote chance, and they had almost decided to give it up when, at a pawnshop in Southcoates, they hit on the place where the veritable watch stolen from the murdered man in the Westphalian forest had been pledged a month before. There was no doubt about it, for the number corresponded with that supplied by the German authorities. This was a pleasant surprise, for it was the first tangible fact that had come to them. Unfortunately, the pawnbroker could not remember much about the man who had pawned the watch. He had given the name of Thompson and had received fifteen shillings. Beyond this the pawnbroker's memory failed.

With renewed hope the detectives began anew a search that covered all the lodging-houses in Hull and places where "Thompson" might have secured employment. It was clear that he would have to find work, for his shortness of money was shown by the pawning of the watch. They found that a man whom they believed to be the suspect had been temporarily employed at the docks, but he had disappeared, and was believed to have gone to Newcastle.

There was no certainty in this clue, but it was the only one left to follow, for they were convinced that "Thompson" was no longer in Hull. So the two went on to Newcastle. They concentrated at first on the workmen at the docks. For four days they trudged from place to place, putting discreet questions to all sorts of people. That labour was in vain. By way of relief they decided to tackle the lodging-houses, as

they had done in Hull—a tedious, unprofitable job, which they carried on for a week before they gave it up in disgust. Such Thompsons as they found were quite innocent persons. There was no trace in the town of any German, or, indeed, of any foreigner who might conceivably be their man.

Moser admitted at a later stage that he was more than half tempted to abandon the whole investigation in despair. There semed likely to be neither credit nor interest in it. A great many successful pieces of detective work, however, have been brought off by dour, pertinacious slogging, and both Froest and he were determined that before they admitted themselves defeated they would explore the last line that was open to them. They resolved to make a final cast among the collieries in the vicinity of Newcastle.

Pit after pit they tried without success. A good deal of physical effort is involved in this sort of thing, and it was a hot and trying summer day. They were depressed and pessimistic when they wearily asked a grimy "banksman" if he had heard of a German seeking work at any of the pits. He drew a muscular arm across his perspiring face. "There were a mon down 'ere about a week ago, a furriner," he said.

"Ah! Where is he now?" asked Moser, who had had too many set-backs of late to jump hastily at conclusions.

"I doan't know much of him 'cept that he didn't seem to have much stomach for th' job. He got the sack, but I believe he fixed up at the railway over yon." He pointed to an engine-shed about half a mile away.

The detectives rewarded him with a shilling and

trudged over to the shed, undaunted by a notice threatening trespassers with penalties. A timekeeper gruffly ordered them away, but both Froest and Moser were men of tact. Without disclosing their identity, they explained that they were looking for a friend of theirs who had recently been taken on in the sheds. He was a foreigner, they added.

"If you don't know any more about him than that," said the timekeeper, mollified by their manner, "I can't help you much. We've a dozen foreigners in the place."

"This man can't have been here long," said Moser. "About a week."

"Come along with me, and we'll look over the list," said the other. "Hurry up. They'll be knocking off soon, and I want to check them out."

A quick glance passed between the detectives. Each knew what the other was thinking.

"Never mind about the list," exclaimed Moser. "We'll stand by you as they go off. Can you make an excuse to speak to each one of the foreigners as he passes out?"

The timekeeper looked them over shrewdly. "I think I can guess what you two gentlemen are," he said. "I'll do my best to help you."

There was nothing to be gained by concealment. "You've guessed right," admited Moser, with abrupt candour. "We're from Scotland Yard, and we're looking for a man who is suspected of a grave crime."

The timekeeper nodded. "Come this way. Mind your heads."

Crawling under trucks and over heaps of cinders, he led them to the little shed by the gate which served as

his office. They were just in time to see the first man check out. Those men to whom the timekeeper spoke were keenly scrutinised by the detectives, and an almost imperceptible shake of the head made their ally aware that the man they sought was none of the first two or three aliens he addressed. They were permitted to pass out. Then there neared them a man whose thumb was bound about by a dirty piece of coloured rag. At first sight of him Moser took his pipe from his mouth and put it in his pocket.

"Hello!" said the timekeeper heartily; "how's your hand now?"

Froest strolled with an air of nonchalant boredom to the other side of the workman, who grinned cheerfully at the affable questioner.

"Much good," he replied, in guttural, broken English. "Soon it will all right be."

Froest was now so close that he could have touched him. Moser moved nearer and laid a detaining finger casually on the suspect's arm. "Did you get that injury when you killed the gamekeeper in the Forest of Kleningberg?" he inquired softly in German.

Even the grime and tan on the other's face could not conceal his ashen pallor as the blood suddenly left his cheeks. The blow had fallen from the clouds. Froest put out a hand and gripped him by the shoulder. "What do you mean?" he asked, relapsing into his native tongue. "I do not understand. Why do you interfere with me?"

"I think you understand very well—Thompson," retorted the inspector, laying a grim emphasis on the name. "Do you see this?" He opened his hand and displayed a watch lying in his palm. "You pawned

this in Hull for fifteen shillings. We are police officers, and you will have to come with us."

"Mein Gott!" gasped the German. He staggered and would have fallen but for the supporting hand of Froest. Wild whimperings and inarticulate words of protest poured from him in fear and protest that carried to the Scotland Yard men the assurance—if they needed it—that they had made no mistake. The man was beside himself, and they waited till he had recovered his composure in some degree before they marched him off to the timekeeper's little shed, where he was given a glass of water in the absence of anything stronger.

Now, strictly, it was none of their duty to prove that this man had committed the murder. That was the business of the Westphalian police. Moser and Froest would have been quite justified in leaving the matter where it was, after a pretty piece of trailing, and handing the man over for extradition on a *prima facie* case to be tried in his own country. But neither Moser nor Froest was the kind of man to leave half finished a job which he had begun. If it was at all possible, they had determined to send "Thompson" back with evidence gathered hundreds of miles from the scene of the murder after those on the spot had failed. It was not too much to say that the mere capture of the suspect on the thin case put together by the Germans up to that moment would not have been enough to warrant his extradition on so grave a charge.

The search of the prisoner yielded results that simplified their task. Spite of all the trouble he had occasioned, he was a maladroit scoundrel, tinged with that stupidity which distinguishes so many murderers.

Among the things that they took from him was a pocket-diary in which, in methodical German fashion, he had recorded his departure from Kleningberg on the day after the "accident"—as he delicately described it. Another damning fact was that in the lining of his overcoat was found a small bullet which had apparently worked its way from his pocket unknown to him, and which was of the identical calibre of the two which had been taken from the dead man's body.

He was given the usual warning, but, shaken though he was, he recognised that the facts against him were too strong, and by implication rather than by direct statements he admitted his guilt.

"What is your real name?" asked Moser.

The prisoner drew a tired hand across his burning forehead and stared straight in front of him. "That I shan't tell you," he said, with a flash of spirit. "You can find out."

"Very well; we will," asserted the inspector.

But it was as Thompson that he was brought back to London, and as Thompson that he was brought up at Bow Street for extradition. Meanwhile, Moser and Froest were free to hunt for additional facts concerning him. Among the first things that they discovered was that the chance which had taken them to Hull to cut his trail, on what was originally a false clue, was even more strange than they had supposed. Blind luck had been with them. He had not gone there directly on his escape from Germany; he had, in fact, sailed to London, and then, for no special reason, had worked his way north to Hull, where, his cash running short, he had pawned the watch. Had he moved in any other

of the scores of directions radiating from London, had he disposed of the watch at any other place than Hull, he might have remained at liberty, notwithstanding all the exertions of Scotland Yard. Moser himself realised that it was something like a fluke which had given him the scent. "Had he only possessed the good sense to stay in the Metropolis under our noses," he said frankly, "I don't think he would have been discovered."

Finger-prints were not then part of the system of Scotland Yard, but there was the well-known Rogues' Gallery—hundreds upon hundreds of portraits—of portraits of rascals who were known to the police, cross-indexed to records of their offences. Among these albums Moser and Froest browsed on what, truth to tell, was a mere off-chance. There, a little to their surprise, they came across an old portrait of Thompson, sent to them, curiously enough, from another district in Germany many years before as that of a man wanted for a batch of swindling transactions.

With this starting-point, their assiduous work brought some interesting details to light. Thompson was not, of course, the prisoner's real name, but he had worn many *aliases,* and he was as much entitled to that as to any other. He was the illegitimate son of a well-known German of high family, and he had refused every opportunity to run straight since he had reached the years of manhood. At about the time that his portrait had reached Scotland Yard he actually was in England, engaged in a series of burglarious operations in Brighton and the vicinity which had hitherto remained a mystery.

Returning to Germany when things had quietened down, he set his wits to work on a new scheme. He would scrape acquaintance with men and women possessed of some sort of property, and, by winning their confidence, get hold of the deeds for a sufficient time to enable him to master their contents and the signatures attached to them. Then he would forge conveyances, mortgage deeds, and similar papers, on which he contrived to raise no inconsiderable sums of money.

So long as the people who advanced money on these deeds remained unaware that they were worthless forgeries, Thompson was comparatively safe from any chance of trouble. Among those whose property had been pledged in this way was the murdered gamekeeper, who was in entire ignorance of the whole matter till some inquiry threatened to open his eyes. Once this man denied the authenticity of the deeds, Thompson knew that it was but a step for him to a long term of imprisonment. He resolved to stop the keeper's mouth at any cost.

It was foolish and futile, as well as a dangerous expedient, but he carried it out in the depths of the Forest of Kleninberg. Then his nerve failed him, and he realised that he had evaded one risk but to become involved in another, more desperate. He took to something like a panic flight. A crime with which the local police did not associate the murder provided him with funds for his escape—the robbery of the Communion plate from a village church. Blunderer though he was in many respects, luck had served him well till Moser and Froest stepped so unexpectedly upon him at the railway works near Newcastle.

Thompson was eventually extradited. It was mentioned at his trial that he had been arrested in England. But the evidence against him was assumed to have been gathered and pieced together by the activity and astuteness of the German police. The men of Scotland Yard let it go at that; it was no further business of theirs. Thompson duly went to the scaffold.

CHAPTER X

THE ARTISTIC TOUCH

THERE were great men before Agamemnon, and there were astute detectives and cunning criminals long before Sherlock Holmes and Raffles were created. Therefore, I draw your attention to M. Canler, who knew nothing about finger-prints or wireless or motor-cars, but who had the good fortune to bring to the guillotine a criminal of such distinctive qualities of subtlety and ruthlessness as would have insured him a measure of infamous success in any era.

M. Canler was one of the earliest chiefs of the Paris Sûreté, although, at the time this story begins, he was simply an astute young detective officer with his career in front of him. To him in the opening days of 1835 there fell the investigation of a curious case of attempted murder and robbery, which was to lead to a climax that might have been the wild invention of some fertile dramatic author.

A man had entrusted two bills of exchange with a Paris bank for collection. One of these was payable on New Year's Eve by a M. Mahossier, of 66, Rue Montorgueil. M. Mahossier, the stranger pointed out, was only likely to be at home between quarter-past three and quarter to four on the afternoon of that day. The significance of this, although the bank people did not appreciate it at the time, was that by that hour their collector—a young man of eighteen—would have finished his round and would, in all likelihood, have in his possession a considerable sum in cash.

The clerk duly called upon Mahossier, whose apartment he found was a back room at the top of four flights of stairs. He could not make any mistake, for someone had roughly scrawled the name in chalk on the panels of the door. As he knocked, the door was flung swiftly open, and two men hurled themselves upon him. One lunged at his back with some sharp instrument, the other threw a throttling arm over his mouth. Wounded and taken by surprise as he was, the clerk fought desperately. He shook his assailants off and frustrated their attempts to wrest his wallet from him. Meantime he raised his voice in loud cries for assistance.

The baffled robbers took to flight, and the matter was placed in the hands of the police. It was only after the local commissary and his men had spent nine fruitless days on the case that the matter was put in Canler's hands.

Things did not look too rosy for the young detective. He found the room in which the attack had taken place completely bare save for two trusses of straw and a large basket with a deal board on top. These things puzzled Canler, but he did not devote any serious attention to them. He learned later of the grim purpose for which they were intended—from the lips of the man who had planned the crime.

Had the bank clerk been overpowered, his body was to have been dismembered and packed amid the straw in the basket. Then they would have been carried to a small house on the outskirts of Paris, where fire would have been used to get rid of the remains. "Thus," asserted the culprit, "I might easily have defied all the detectives in the world, your-

self included, to find the slightest trace of the crime. The man would have disappeared, and you and all the rest would have suspected him of absconding with the money. The hue and cry would have been after him, and I should never have been suspected."

But this is getting ahead of the story. It was patent that the name of Mahossier was an *alias*. There only remained such descriptions of the two assailants as could be obtained and the handwriting on the door. Of the latter Canler could do no more than take a mental note, for photography had not come into use in those days.

Still, there was always a possibility that a man who has used an *alias* on one occasion may have used it on another. Canler began to search those peculiar lodging-houses of Paris, which have no exact counterpart in London. All those places were bound to keep a register of their clients available for the inspection of the police. Thus it was that after some days he discovered the name Mahossier in the register of a *garni* in the Faubourg du Temple. The man, accompanied by an individual calling himself Ficellier, had slept there on the night of the attempted murder. Moreover, the description given by the landlady left little room for doubt. It seemed an incredibly foolish thing that a man pursued by the police should leave so obvious a trail, but then, as Canler knew, criminals do do foolish things.

For the moment, however, Canler was more interested in Ficellier. As this man was described, a chord of recollection was struck in the detective's mind. A little before, one François had been arrested for obtaining wine by fraud, and was still awaiting trial.

Canler had no doubt that he and Ficellier were one and the same. If so, an accomplice was under lock and key.

François might be induced to "talk." Canler had no such diffidence as might have beset a British detective in making the attempt to obtain an incriminating admission.

He visited François in his cell. "Tell me," he said abruptly, "why you went to Pageot's *garni* under the name of Ficellier?"

The other at once admitted the fact. "I knew there was a warrant out against me for this wine business," he said. "I wasn't going to be fool enough to give my own name for the police to see."

It was strange that, while François should have taken the precaution of changing his name, Mahossier should have risked retaining his. Canler said nothing more at this stage. He could not resist still believing François to be a confederate. He went back to the Faubourg du Temple to pick up any further clues. In conversation with the wife of the lodging-house-keeper he learned that Mahossier had previously stayed at the place under the name of Bâton.

This revelation was received by the detective with mixed feelings, for Bâton was a gaol-bird well known to him. Bâton was not likely to be above the crime, but Canler's recollection was that his appearance was totally different from the description that had been given of Mahossier. However, he was taking no chances. There was one way of putting the question at rest, and in an hour or two Bâton was gathered into the Prefecture of Police and confronted with the bank clerk and other witnesses. They did not know

him. Nor could they swear to François. The muddle seemed more insoluble than ever.

If Bâton was not Mahossier, then some other criminal had used Bâton's name. The selection might have been pure chance, but Canler felt that unlikely. More probable was it that someone had borrowed the name of an acquaintance. He looked up those rascals who were on intimate terms with Bâton and struck the name of a man whose description came close to that of the Mahossier of the Rue Montorgueil. This was a gentleman known in the police records as Gaillard.

This was a very long shot. There was nothing beyond the resemblance by which to associate Gaillard with the crime. But when Bâton was released Canler met him, by chance, as it were, on the steps of the Prefecture, and they fell into casual talk as they walked away together. The conversation—Canler saw to that—drifted on to Gaillard, and, though there was nothing direct, there was enough in what Bâton said to confirm the detective in his opinion that it would be worth while to look Gaillard up.

Then began another tedious search of the lodging-house registers, and a score of Gaillards were sought out. Nineteen of these were found to be quite innocent people. The twentieth could not be found. A place was located, however, where he had once stayed. Here, though no one could say where he had gone, he had left behind a bundle of political songs which Canler examined. Among them was an insulting letter addressed to the Prefect of Police. Why Gaillard, having written it, should not have sent it was of little importance. The great thing, from Canler's point of

view, was that the handwriting was similar to that which had been chalked on the door of the room to which the bank clerk had been decoyed. The quest had at last taken a definite line.

But for the time there was little further progress. Gaillard could not be found. Canler, who knew the uses of discreet publicity, let it be known that he was seeking for him, and a man named Avril, in prison for a minor crime, volunteered to locate him. For a week, accompanied by a detective, he roamed Paris without success.

Meanwhile, François had been kept under a persistent interrogation by the examining magistrate, for the indirect admission extorted from him by Canler that he had spent the night of the crime with Mahossier convinced the authorities that he was mixed up in the business. It was the adroit Canler, however, who, while escorting him to the Palace of Justice one day, got from him a hint that Gaillard was responsible for an even more serious crime which had taken place a fortnight before the attack on the bank messenger.

This was the brutal murder of a man named Chardon and his bedridden mother. Up to that time there had not been the shred of a clue to assist the police in their investigations. Up to this time they had been confronted with a blank wall. According to François, Gaillard had told him the details of this exploit while he and the other were celebrating New Year's Day. He repeated his assertions to Canler's chief, M. Allard, and it became more imperative than ever that Gaillard should be found.

Hard upon this, Avril, whose little holiday from the monotony of gaol had been so unsuccessful from the

point of view of the detectives, remembered that Gaillard had an aunt living in the Rue Bar-du-Bec. Canler, accompanied by Allard, started off hot-foot to see what this lady could say. They found that she lived over the shop of a packing-case-maker, and in answer to their knock she cautiously surveyed them through a small trap-door which had been let in the panels.

"Who are you? What do you want?" she demanded suspiciously.

They explained their identity. "We wish to ask you a few questions about your nephew Gaillard," added Canler.

The old woman unbolted the door. "Don't call him Gaillard," she protested. "The rascal has no right to my name. His proper name is Lacenaire."

The detectives looked at one another. Still another name At every step of the inquiry they found their elusive quarry had adopted another masquerade.

"So that's his name, is it?" remarked Canler gently. "What kind of a fellow is he?"

The old lady shrugged her shoulders. "As wicked a scoundrel as you could find in France," she declared. "I have no doubt he would murder me without compunction if he had the opportunity. He knows I have a little bit of money. That is why I had this trap-door made so that I may see people before I let them in."

Apart from giving them the real name of the man they sought she could afford them little other help. She simply confirmed the impression they had already formed of Gaillard. If they could lay hands on him they hoped to find means to show that he was guilty

of the murder of the Chardons. The bank-clerk affair had become a minor consideration.

A fierce, intensive search of the capital was made. Descriptions of Lacenaire were sent broadcast over the country. Canler spent strenuous days and sleepless nights renewing fruitless casts in every direction. Then one of those extraordinary and yet simple chances that at times resolve such problems happened. A man calling himself Jacob Levy was arrested in Beaune for trying to pass a false bill of exchange. The Beaune police remembered that their colleagues in Paris were looking for a man who was uncommonly like Levy. They went deeper into the matter and found that they had captured, not a jackal, but a tiger—Lacenaire himself.

All the same, the credit of bringing the case to an issue must really belong to Canler. It was his painstaking and determined investigation that had unmasked Lacenaire and shown his complicity in the Chardon crime. Without his work, "Jacob Levy" would merely have been convicted of a peddling forgery, and a master of crime would in a little have been free to start his practices again.

They brought Lacenaire to Paris, and Canler and Allard went to visit him while he was lying manacled in a cell. This ferocious ruffian was a silken-mannered, well-bred, accomplished scholar, with a peculiar code of philosophy. He was polite and courteous to everyone with whom he came in association during his imprisonment. "This politeness," said the Chief of the Sûreté, who ought to have known, "was not studied for the occasion; it was the manner of a man gently bred and reared."

The circumstances surrounding this man were enough to show, even at that stage, that he was no ordinary criminal. For four years or so there had been numerous mysterious happenings in which he was, rightly or wrongly, believed to have had a leading part. When brought to Paris he was under the impression that the only offence of which he would be accused was the attempt on the bank clerk. Of this he was quite willing to talk.

To the detectives he admitted that he had posed as Mahossier. He neither bragged nor whined, for, to do him justice, he was entirely free from any touch of cant. The thing was a business enterprise—an operation which had been unlucky. That was all.

"Who was in it with you?" asked Canler, with an air of indifference that did not deceive the prisoner.

Lacenaire shook his head. "Pardon, m'sieu. Our pride lies in never turning round on our associates unless they themselves peach upon us. It is useless questioning me on that point. You will get nothing from me."

"In that case," was the reply, "you may as well know that we have had statements both from François and from Avril. We know that you were concerned with the murder of the Chardons."

The intelligent Lacenaire was not prepared to accept this off-hand. He met the blow without perceptible emotion, although the news that the police believed him to have a hand in the murder must have been a surprise to him. "You will have to convince me of that," he said smilingly.

Canler and Allard were not slow to take the hint. They showed him that their assertion was no bluff—

that their information came from at least two of his confederates.

"Very well," said Lacenaire, at last. "So they have betrayed me. In that event you shall know all."

"That will finish you, you know," observed Allard, who, strangely enough, felt some tinge of sympathy, of friendship, for the extraordinary prisoner.

"Oh, I know," answered Lacenaire lightly. "It is true," he went on, "that for the affair in the Rue Montorgueil I should have been sentenced to penal servitude for life only, while for the affair Chardon I shall be executed ; but it does not matter—it is the only way of being revenged on Avril and François who have so basely betrayed me. As soon as I became a murderer, between me and the scaffold there was a bond, a contract. My life had ceased to be mine. It belonged to the law and the executioner. It is no expiation, it is a consequence, the discharge of a gambling debt."

He was as good as his word. Quite coolly he admitted that for years he had made a trade of murder.

"To kill without remorse is the highest of pleasures. . . . I kill a man as I drink a glass of wine. . . . I want people to know me as I am, and I won't deny that I consider myself unique. If I had not been educated I should have been an ordinary criminal like all the rest. As it is, I doubt whether in all history there can be found two criminals like myself." That was his philosophy. He regretted bitterly that he had not always acted alone. "I will tell you, Monsieur Canler, where I departed from my usual caution, and I know I shall pay for it with my head. That was in taking partners. But for them I should now be in America with ten or eleven thousand francs, which would have

kept me from want for a couple of years. As you were good enough to say, I am intelligent. My intelligence might have made a merchant prince or a great journalist of me. If I had worked alone no one could have split upon me ; I should not have been obliged to split upon others. I am the more sorry for this, seeing that these were the only times except once that I availed myself of aid. Whenever I have acted alone no one has been any the wiser whether in small or great things."

Lacenaire began early—even before his father, who was a Lyons tradesman, went bankrupt. At that time, as he said, there was no necessity for him to rob or to kill. One early morning, returning from a spree, he observed a well-dressed stranger, who had also dined well, crossing the Morand Bridge. He promptly throttled this man, robbed him of 5,000 francs and a gold watch and chain, and dropped the body into the Rhone. This murder he regarded as quite a casual incident. He had come to Paris and tried to earn a living in diverse ways. But crime presented itself as the easiest method, and one of his schemes was the pilfering of silver forks and spoons from the restaurants. He claims to have abstracted 1,200 of these before he was caught and had his first taste of prison.

Much space would be needed to tell the full detail of his exploits. He spared neither Avril nor François in his confession, but nothing—and Canler tried every device in his repertoire—would induce him to give a hint that would implicate other confederates. With Avril he had attempted to rob bank messengers by luring them to lonely apartments to collect cash for forged bills no less than three times. On each occasion something had gone wrong.

Then it was that Lacenaire's thoughts had turned to Chardon, a hypocritical rogue to whom he owed a grudge, and who was reputed to hoard a bag of gold at his lodgings. Lacenaire and Avril called on Chardon one midday. Before he could suspect their purpose, Lacenaire had stabbed him with a sharpened file, and Avril finished off the work with a chopper. Chardon's old bedridden mother was also stabbed with the file and left for dead, although, as a matter of fact, she must have lingered for nearly forty-eight hours, for her body was still warm when the crime was discovered two days later. The hoard of gold proved a myth. All that Lacenaire and his friend could find were 500 francs and a few silver articles. With consummate effrontery they told an unexpected caller that Chardon had gone out, and, bloodstained as they were, strolled away to a Turkish bath, dined, and spent a pleasant evening at the theatre.

The next day, preparations were begun for the Mahossier exploit. Lacenaire and Avril, posing as law students, took lodgings in the Rue Montorgueil. But Avril got into trouble with the police over another affair, and it became necessary for Lacenaire to look for another partner. Thus he had picked on François, who had expressed himself willing to commit murder for twenty francs. It was to win this man's confidence that Lacenaire had bluntly told him that he was the Chardon murderer. Lacenaire held that it was the bungling of François in not maintaining a grip of the bank clerk that had been responsible for the fiasco.

Lacenaire became something of a popular hero after his confession. He accepted his laurels with dignity, but made it clear that they were deserved. He and

Avril both went to the guillotine, and, according to Canler, who was with him to the last moment, he died without flinching. François escaped with penal servitude for life.

One passage from Lacenaire's memoirs, written in prison, may be fittingly quoted in conclusion: "Death is the pain of a moment. I have never dreaded suffering. I have never pitied the suffering of others, and I don't want them to pity mine. If I had not been caught I should have ended by making a fortune and living in France without fear or remorse, a respectable father of a family—though I admit such an ending would have been rather unjust. I have never in the course of my crimes experienced remorse or emotion. My sleep has been never disturbed. I sleep so peacefully."

CHAPTER XI

THE MASTER FORGER

ONE of the most complete men of the world who ever walked Whitehall was Fred Jarvis. An earthquake would not have jarred his self-possession. In New York, in Paris, in Berlin, he was as much at home as in London. His suavity was proof against any happening. When a murderer thrust a loaded pistol within twelve inches of his head he merely said, "Excuse me," and one sinewy hand closed about the weapon and withdrew it from the astonished assassin's grasp. Jarvis could be equally mellow in arresting a murderer or chatting with a marquess.

This serenity of manner was wedded to a wide experience of men and things. Jarvis could appreciate a good dinner or a good play. He was a philosopher, but no cynic. He had none of the rough-and-ready attitude of some of his colleagues. It was his business to put down crime, but, though he handled his cases with resolution, he always carried them through like a perfect gentleman. Consequently, the men and women of the underworld liked him as well as they liked any of his profession. If one has to go to the scaffold or to penal servitude, it is something to be sent there with polite urbanity. Jarvis had friends in all circles of life, and he profited thereby.

Those whose acquantance with him was superficial might fail to mark how the man contrived to hide a faculty of quick apprehension of obscure detail. It was never easy to guess how much he really had seen.

Only when he finally unmasked his guns did it become apparent that no trifle had eluded him. He could spring as quickly as a tiger, could follow up his quarry as patiently as a weasel.

A sidelight on his resource is afforded by the manner in which he captured two Wisconsin bank robbers named Sheag and Floyd. The American authorities had notified him that they were on a German liner which would touch at Southampton. Jarvis knew that he could do nothing while they were under the flag of a foreign State, so he had the boat signalled and, quietly smoking a cigar, put out on a tug to meet it. The passengers were told that they would have to transfer to another ship, and that the tug was there to carry them aboard. Entirely unsuspicious of the ruse, the two thieves, with other passengers, made their way to the tug. The moment they were under the British flag, Jarvis and his men were about them. One of them drew a pistol just a second too late. Jarvis, less polite than usual, launched a punch that reached the other's jaw before the weapon had come to a level. After that matters went peacefully.

Never was this Chief Detective-Inspector matched against a foeman more worthy of his steel than when he started out on a two-years' quest against Mendell Howard, perhaps the cleverest and most elusive forger who ever disconcerted the police of many nations. The affair began with a letter to Scotland Yard from a Belgian bank, which had suffered heavily from a system of wholesale forgeries of bonds and notes. This was followed by complaints from France, Germany, Spain, and other countries. No one knew where these forgeries originated, nor could any guess be made as to

their author, save that he was an unquestionable master who had at his disposal much money and a perfect organisation. He might have been operating from any place in the world. There was no special reason to suppose that he was in London. The best detectives of many countries were baffled.

The case was turned over to Jarvis, and he began quietly and systematically to consider all those rogues in London who were of a calibre big enough to have a hand in it. There were several. After much labour for many months, Jarvis was unable to link any of them with the forgeries.

This left the investigation nothing but a blind and boring grope in the dark unless something happened. It did. Among the occupants of the aristocratic houses in Eaton Square was a lady who was a little bit of a busybody. The back of her house overlooked the rear of houses in Chester Terrace, and she had long been worried because a certain flat roof commanded by her windows was used by a man in connection with various photographic operations. She took the trouble to ascertain he was not a professional photographer by inspecting the front of the premises, and thus making sure that they were used privately. So she indited a long and much-underlined letter to Scotland Yard. She was suspicious of something—she did not know what.

On the face of it, it was one of those futile, almost meaningless letters from silly people which reach Scotland Yard by scores. It is, however, part of the system to ensure that all letters of this type, however seemingly extravagant, are brought to the notice of the senior detectives. Most of those into whose hands it

came tossed it aside with a contemptuous curl of the lip. Not so Jarvis. He did not build a lot on it. But, as he had exhausted all the obvious possibilities, he was willing enough to take a remote chance. With a pair of powerful binoculars, camouflaged in a neat-brown-paper parcel, he called upon the fair correspondent. No doubt his suave and easy manners made their due impression upon her. At any rate, she readily allowed him to take his post in a back room, where, under cover himself, he could watch through his glasses the roof of the mysterious photographer.

The latter was beyond a peradventure a busy man, for he was to be seen again and again placing photographic prints in the open air to dry. Strain his eyes as he would through his fine glasses, Jarvis could not make out what the subject of the prints was. Nor, under a close scrutiny, did the man himself correspond in any degree with any of those gentlemen listed at the Yard as dangerous forgers. He was an entire stranger to the detective.

The intelligent reader may ask why Jarvis did not resolve all doubts at once by raiding the house. There were several reasons against this. In the first place, no magistrate was likely to grant a search warrant on the slight and flimsy material which was available. There is nothing in the least criminal in being an enthusiast in amateur photography. The odds were that the man in Chester Terrace was simply an honest citizen riding a hobby. Any hasty step might not only make the Chief Detective-Inspector look foolish, but bring him a severe official rap on the knuckles. People who could afford to live in Chester Terrace were quite likely to have influential acquaintances who could make things

unpleasant for officious Scotland Yard men. Even assuming the possibility of the man being a forger, it would be unwise to stake everything on one throw of the dice. Jarvis did not want his case to blow up before it was fairly started.

Jarvis saw that the watch from the back was maintained, while he detailed two of the most expert shadowers at the Yard to "tail" the photographer whenever he left the house. Their vigil was long fruitless, for all his actions and journeys at this time showed nothing that was not entirely consistent with innocence. There was no difficulty in finding out that he called himself Mendell Howard. Pushing his inquiries in one way and another, Jarvis found that he was a man of German extraction, who had lived several years in the United States. A pretty, piquant French girl lived with him and passed as his wife. Jarvis sent urgent cables to friends in the American detective service to ask what they knew about Howard. The reply was wholly in the suspect's favour. They had nothing against him. He had called himself an inventor, and it was a fact that he had patented several ingenious and practical appliances at Washington. He was married to a Frenchwoman. Jarvis began to believe that he might have been wasting time. If Howard was an inventor, the whole of the interest in photography was explained.

There was a little talk about the matter at Scotland Yard. More than once Jarvis brought up the name of Mendell Howard at those periodical conferences in which the detectives of London informally compare notes and exchange information. But Howard was quite unknown. All this negative result could not fail to

have an effect. The watch on Howard was not quite so sedulously preserved. There were other matters demanding attention. But Jarvis, nevertheless, did not entirely ignore him. Now and again he would send a man or drop round himself to see what the other was doing.

There can be little doubt that, either from the incautious act of some subordinate detective, or from some other circumstance, Howard's suspicions had been awakened during the first moves against him. For that reason he had acted in such a way as to throw the detectives almost completely off the trail. No man who is on his guard can be consistently shadowed without becoming aware of the fact. The chief mistake that Howard made was underrating the tenacity of Jarvis. As time went on and he realised that he was no longer under observation he became a little careless.

In a sense, it was chance that brought Fred Jarvis peremptorily back once more to an intensive investigation of Mendell Howard's habits. As I have said, the detective was not averse from a good dinner. One evening in an idle hour he found himself at the Café Monico, off Piccadilly Circus, studying a menu with the deliberate care of a man who knew the importance of the matter. Now, no one knew better than Jarvis that big crooks in these days are extensive patrons of the most fashionable restaurants and hotels. Partly for that reason, partly from habit, his eyes would flicker over the top of the card in quick, nonchalant survey of each fresh arrival. This was done almost unconsciously. He was not there for any other purpose than to eat his dinner He was expecting no one.

Thus he saw "Big Frank" swagger into the room

accompanied by no less a person than Mendell Howard. The detective quietly gave his order to a waiter, and leaned back indifferently to await its execution. He was doing some quick thinking. "Big Frank" was a man unfavourably known to the police of several Continental countries. He had had a colourful criminal career, but his main speciality was assisting in the organisation of great forgery conspiracies. Whoever Mendell Howard was, he had at least one queer acquaintance. As he ate, the detective put two and two together and chuckled in detached appreciation of the way in which he had so nearly been outwitted. It was evident that a cog had slipped somewhere. He determined to make sure of his man in future. He finished his dinner with apparent leisure, and strolled out smoking a cigar with the air of a man who had not a care in the world. Once outside, however, he acted swiftly. A cab took him to Scotland Yard, and he gave a series of quick instructions.

Day and night thereafter detectives, securely screened from notice, were in the neighbourhood of Howard's house. Others in a variety of disguises followed the suspect wherever he went. To minimise the chance of recognition, the men were constantly changed. A meek and inoffensive-looking cleric would be replaced by a silk-hatted man about town, who would give way to a hawker or a soldier. Jarvis was not inclined to underrate the wariness of his opponent, and he warned his men to be exceptionally careful. Howard, it was pretty certain, had plentiful supplies of money, and if he was again alarmed it was more than likely that he would abandon his plans and render all the labour of the detectives vain.

The German-American, however, had come to the conclusion that he had nothing more to fear from Scotland Yard. He had shaken them off once, and it did not occur to him that they were troubling him again. With supreme confidence he carried on his affairs unostentatiously, but without any elaborate or special precautions. Do not imagine that all this took place in a period of days, or even weeks. It spread over month after month. The Continental banks were becoming more and more agitated as the operations of the unknown forger were steadily extended. Big rewards were offered for his discovery. Still Jarvis waited.

At well-known restaurants, at West End hotel bars, sometimes in billiard saloons, Howard was watched with unwearying vigilance. There was a day or two when he was much in the company of two Frenchmen. Jarvis sent their records over to the Sûreté in Paris, and discovered that they were in the records of that organisation as men who had played parts in many cases of forgery. Another of the suspect's companions was a tall Austrian who was believed to have been implicated in frauds on Spanish banks. There were strange visitors, too, at the house in Chester Terrace —men and women whose portraits were in the rogues' galleries of many detective bureaus. Prominent among them was a benevolent-looking, white-bearded old gentleman, of whom a special note was sent to Jarvis.

This was the point at which he became convinced that the time was ripe. For that white-bearded old gentleman was the finest criminal brain in Great Britain —probably in the world. Johnnie Carr was an organiser and financier of criminal enterprises on a vast scale, a Moriarty of real life, whose capacity may be

measured by the fact that, unlike most clever crooks, he amassed an immense fortune, which he retained to the day of his death. If Mendell Howard was in touch with Johnnie Carr, there were unquestionably big things afoot. Johnnie was no piker.

So Jarvis decided that he would introduce himself to Howard. Before he could carry his resolve into effect, however, there came to him a scrap of conversation overheard by one of his men who was watching the Chester Terrace house. The temperamental French girl had voiced her dissatisfaction at the manner in which she conceived she was being neglected. "I will not stand it," she declared shrilly with a stamp of her little foot. "You may laugh, but it will be the worse for you. Suppose I go to the police and tell them——"

At this stage she stopped suddenly, as if a hand had been clapped over her mouth. The detective, listening from the back room of a house in Eaton Square, could hear nothing more beyond a subdued muttering. It was enough. An hour or two later Howard went for a stroll. On the other side of the road a well-dressed man kept a little in advance of him, and occasionally lifted his hat as if to let the breeze play on his head. In the lining of the hat was fixed a tiny piece of mirror. Jarvis was using the old but ever-new trick known to most detectives. He was shadowing his man from the front.

It soon became apparent that there was no intention in the walk beyond a mere constitutional. The inspector decided that it would be mere waste of time to go on. In Sloane Street he crossed the road and waited for the other to come up. As Howard came abreast of him he stretched out a detaining hand.

"You're Mr. Howard, aren't you?" he asked in his silkiest tones. "Will you excuse me for a second? I should like to have a word with you about Johnnie Carr."

Howard came to an abrupt halt, and with one hand thrust carelessly into a trousers pocket, and with an equanimity equalling that of Jarvis, made a cool survey of the detective. Whatever was passing in his mind, he gave no sign of perturbation. Jarvis was utterly unknown to him by sight, although his name must have been familiar. There were occasions when Johnnie Carr had sent strange men to carry messages. For the moment he was without suspicion.

"Sure," he agreed amiably. "I didn't expect to hear from Johnnie so soon. Where would you like to go? Shall we find a saloon and have a drink, or would you prefer to go to an hotel?"

With an appearance of casual absent-mindedness, Jarvis linked his arm with that of his companion. "I think it would be a good idea if we went back to your house to talk it over," he said mildly. "We shan't be interrupted there."

The forger tried to release his arm, but the detective's grip was firm. It was impossible for Howard to remain any longer under a misapprehension. "What's the big idea?" he asked coldly. "You haven't come from Johnnie Carr. Who are you?"

"I'd recommend you to make no fuss," said the other. "I am Chief Detective-Inspector Jarvis of Scotland Yard. I propose to detain you on suspicion of being concerned in the forgery of certain bonds and notes. Need I tell you that anything you say may be used as evidence?"

Mendell Howard laughed. Surprised and taken aback though he was, he was determined not to go down without a fight. It was a question how much the detective knew, but he did not believe it to be much. He was confident that he could carry through a bluff. "The joke's on me, Mr. Jarvis," he declared. "I guess some of my neighbours have been puzzled about me. You see, I'm a scientific investigator, and I spend a lot of my time making experiments with different apparatus. There are all kinds of people here and in the States who will tell you that I'm a respectable man. By all means come and look over my place."

"I hope it will be as you say, Mr. Howard," agreed Jarvis. "Does Johnnie Carr help in your experiments?"

It was a palpable hit, which Howard ignored. They neared the house in Chester Terrace, and two or three men of Jarvis' staff appeared from nowhere. Borrowing his prisoner's keys, which Howard surrendered with a good grace, the Chief Inspector made his way into the house.

Unless entry had been made in some such fashion, it was apparent that many hours might be spent in attempting to obtain an entry, and meanwhile much interesting evidence would probably have disappeared. The solid front and back doors were secured by strong and effective locks and bolts, as were many of the rooms of the house. Howard looked on with an indifferent smile while they examined his laboratory. To quiet invitations to explain the purpose of certain things he replied always that they were used for experimental purposes. Indeed, for a "scientific in-

vestigator" on particular lines he was well equipped. The laboratory was furnished with appliances and materials which gave it the appearance of a printing establishment which had been set up in a photographic studio shared by a chemist. There were hand and foot presses, tins of coloured inks, jars of chemicals, powerful lenses, lathes, cameras, lithographic stones, papers of all kinds, thicknesses, and textures. Never was a forger more lavishly and luxuriously set up. Some of the photographic plates and prints were direct evidence of the purpose of all this, although not a single bogus note was found on the premises.

A pantechnicon van was necessary to cart all this stuff away, and a large room had to be arranged for its display at the Old Bailey during the trial. The ablest counsel at the criminal bar of England were employed on both sides, for the authorities were determined to break up the forgery conspiracy, and Howard's friends were equally determined that no money should be spared in the attempt to save him.

It is a curious fact that little of this story was divulged during the case. In easy, conversational tones Jarvis began his story with the arrest of Howard. The essential part of the evidence was the discoveries at Chester Terrace. How Scotland Yard worked to bring about the arrest was not a matter for the jury.

Howard got fifteen years. The rest was easy. One by one his associates were run down by various detective forces. Old Johnnie Carr, whom Jarvis had marked for his own, was too cunning to be implicated in this matter. A year or two later, however, he joined Howard in prison. He had meddled in quite another forgery plot, and Jarvis had been waiting.

CHAPTER XII

THE VENGEANCE OF GERACCI

A SINGLE-HANDED investigator is a spectacular figure. He heightens the dramatic effects of detective work. He is a favourite of fiction and of the newspapers. Yet the truth is that it is only once in a great while that a detective plays a lone hand. For the essence of successful criminal investigation is teamwork. There have been mysteries that could never have been solved in any other way.

Such a case was that of Marie Geracci, whom passion drove far across the seas from her sunny Italy to meet a grim fate—but I am getting ahead of my story.

Picture, then, if you please, some urchins playing on the edge of a lake near a tiny Connecticut town. An object floating on the water attracted their attention, and with boyish curiosity they launched a boat and rowed out to inspect it. They found it to be a corded trunk, which they towed ashore and opened. Within was the dead body of a woman. Thoroughly alarmed, they informed the police, and it at once became evident that a singular murder mystery had arisen.

Strictly, all this was nothing to do, at that time, with a burly, genial-faced man who read of the discovery while he sat in his office in Mulberry Street, New York. True, George Dougherty was a Deputy Police Commissioner and chief of detectives of New

York City, but Connecticut was outside his jurisdiction. On the face of things he was no more likely to be concerned than if the murder had taken place in Timbuctoo. It was a matter purely and simply for the Connecticut police.

Nevertheless, being a man very much in love with his profession, he read the details with interest. The body was that of a once beautiful woman, something over forty years old. She had been strangled. After death a number of peculiar wounds, which puzzled the doctors, had been inflicted on her head. In all likelihood weights had been fastened to the trunk to sink it, but they must have become detached. Neither the clothes of the dead woman nor the trunk afforded any clue to her identity or to that of her murderer.

That was all. The coroner's jury returned an obvious verdict that the woman had been killed by some person or persons unknown. There the mystery might have remained had not Dougherty decided to take a hand.

There was an impression on his mind—call it instinct, intuition, reasoning, what you will. He visualised a cleverly planned murder which had taken place, not in Connecticut, but in New York, many miles away. It was highly improbable that the victim had lived locally, or someone would have come forward to identify her. The trunk, it was conceivable, had been brought from some other district to the lonely spot where it had been found. Now, by road, rail, and sea there were easy methods of communication with Connecticut from New York.

This theory, though plausible enough, had flaws. It was possible that the murder had taken place far

from New York. Dougherty, however, acted. The local police were quite willing that New York should look into the matter, and the Deputy-Commissioner sent a couple of his men down and himself followed at their heels.

Publicity, discreetly employed, is a valuable asset to the detective. Dougherty knew that if it could be once established who the dead woman was his task would be much simplified. The crime became a nation-wide subject of discussion. Photographs and descriptions of the victim were broadcast. Dougherty even went the length of enlisting the aid of the churches and schools in the attempt at identification. The Missing Persons Bureau—a highly organised department of the New York police—was consulted in vain. No person came forward who could shed any light on the business.

Finger-prints are seldom of use in a case such as this—they are of more use in the identification of habitual criminals—but they were examined as a matter of routine. The trunk was closely scrutinised. It had been little used, was of quite a common type, and there was no maker's name.

Dougherty and his men, however, found material for one or two inferences. They concluded that the crime was one of passion—probably of revenge. How else could the insane wounds inflicted after death be explained? There were certain personal characteristics which inclined Dougherty to the belief that the dead woman was an Italian. Her hands revealed that she had done much sewing. Here was an important point that might narrow the search. Was there an Italian needlewoman missing?

Consideration brought another important surmise. How had the heavy trunk been taken to the lake? It would have been a tedious, almost impossible business to carry it by hand. Some vehicle must have been employed.

With these facts and deductions Dougherty had no doubt of the point from which he should start. He issued comprehensive instructions to his men. "Investigate every railroad and trolley station, every expressman, or any person who had a vehicle of any kind for hire or loan. Always show the photograph of the trunk. Find out how the trunk came here, then report. Report the slightest progress to me day or night."

The search was spread over a wide area. Every police force in Connecticut and the greater portion of New York State threw themselves into the quest. Dougherty went back to stir things up where he believed that the heart of the mystery lay—in New York City. The formidable machinery of modern detection was set in motion; a relentless, systematic investigation began. Hundreds of detectives were given photographs of the trunk, and wherever such kind of things were sold they pushed their inquiries. Other officers visited shipping companies, railway stations, express agencies, and other organisations by which the trunk might have been despatched.

All this might well have proved futile. There was no shred of definite evidence that the crime had happened in New York. All this enormous trouble might prove to be a mere threshing of the wind.

At the end of a telephone wire Dougherty waited and pressed his men forward while they groped in the

dark. There were the usual irritating false trails, apparent clues that shattered like bubbles when they were probed. It was monotonous, tedious, heart-breaking work without any of the glitter and glamour of the detective story.

Meanwhile the two officers left in Connecticut were no less busy. They nosed, persistently as bloodhounds, for some scent. Their pertinacity was at last rewarded. At a remote railway station an agent—or station-master, as we should say—remembered the arrival of the trunk. For the first time, the theory to which Dougherty had pinned himself received some confirmation.

He listened while over the long-distance telephone he was told the recollections of the agent. Three men had arrived at the station late one evening to collect a trunk which had been sent from the Grand Central Station, New York, under the check system which is usual in America. One of them was a tall, strong, grey-haired man of about sixty, speaking with an Italian accent. The others were young, slim, dark men who held themselves apart, and whom the agent was not sure that he would recognise again. But of the older man he was certain. He had helped him to put the trunk on a wheelbarrow, and it had been wheeled off—whither he knew not.

Scarcely had Dougherty sent a man to the Grand Central Station to interview the baggage-man when another ring at the telephone brought word of an even more important discovery.

Among the horde of detectives who were ransacking New York one had been lucky. In a lower-class quarter of the town he had found a dealer in second-

hand goods who had recognised the photograph of the trunk as that of one he had sold to a tall, grey-haired Italian. Staying only to arrange that the man who was making inquiries at the Grand Central Station should join him at the dealer's shop, Dougherty dashed away to follow this new clue.

There could be no doubt that a scent had been struck. The dealer was able, not only to describe the trunk minutely, but he remembered delivering it to a tenement in Corcoran's Roost. The detectives shot a glance at each other when the locality was mentioned. Corcoran's Roost was an unsavoury spot well known to them. It was peopled by poor-class Italians, and it was also the haunt of many crooks who would hesitate at very little. More than one murder had happened in the locality, and more were to happen in the years to come.

To this place, then, the dealer had delivered the trunk. The old Italian had requested him to call back later to take it to the Grand Central Station after it was packed. This the dealer had done, and two young Italians, evident associates of the older man, had helped to place it in the waggon.

While Dougherty was digesting this information the detective from the railway station arrived. He reported that the baggage-man remembered the trunk. It had been brought by an old Italian, accompanied by two younger men. They all held tickets to a place in Connecticut, and the trunk was checked through.

In the dingy recesses of the dealer's shop Dougherty and his men held a conference. For a group of detectives to show themselves openly at Corcoran's Roost would be to invite trouble. News flies quickly

in such places, and it might be that the murderer was still there. If so he must have no warning.

So they drove to the place in the dealer's covered waggon, and from its shelter he pointed out to them a first-floor window with dingy green shutters. That was where he had taken the trunk. The detectives made a rapid survey of the shabby tenement building, and then, while his men took up strategic points to cut off any retreat, Dougherty made for the front entrance. The block was in charge of an elderly Irishwoman.

She was very willing to answer questions. Two rooms on the first floor had been taken about three months before by a family with a queer Dago name which she "disremembered." There was an old man of about sixty, his wife, two young men, and a girl. She described the wife, and, as Dougherty expected, the description tallied with that of the victim of the tragedy.

Days had gone by since the Irishwoman had seen any of her lodgers—she was not precisely sure how long it was. That, however, had aroused no suspicion in her mind. They were all at work early and stayed late, so that their hours at home were few.

The detective borrowed her keys and entered the flat. One glance around the squalid rooms was enough to show that the mystery had been traced to its source. There were the signs of a desperate struggle, and in some large bloodstained wire nails and a hammer was an obvious explanation of the strange wounds in the head of the victim.

Dougherty called his companions and the place was thoroughly examined. Nothing was found that would

reveal a name. Nor did inquiries in the neighbourhood help in any degree. No one knew who this group of Italians were, whence they had come, or whither they had gone. For such small necessities as they had required they had paid cash—and, anyway, Corcoran's Roost knew enough to mind its own business. It did not pay to be too inquisitive in that district. All that could be deduced was from the date given by the dealer as that of the purchase of the trunk. From this it was assumed that the murder had taken place three weeks before. It was also hoped that something would result from a soiled white linen collar picked up on the floor of the flat. It bore the laundry mark G.172.A.

On the remote chance that the assassin might return to the flat detectives were left in the rooms. But Dougherty did not rely upon this. Among the detectives of New York are a number of Italians whose services have often proved of value in that cosmopolitan city. It was to these that Dougherty now turned. The chief point for the moment was the laundry mark.

For days this thin thread was followed up. It was found at last to have belonged to an Italian, a well-to-do olive oil merchant. By methods well known to police of all countries, the second-hand dealer was afforded a quiet glimpse of this man. He was positive that, although there was some slight resemblance, he was not the man who bought the trunk.

So soon as this was sure, Dougherty approached the olive oil merchant. The thing had to be done with some discretion, for, although not the murderer, he might still have had some concern with the crime. Finally, however, the Deputy Police Commissioner

showed him a photograph of the dead woman and asked if he recognised it.

The other replied without hesitation. Yes, it was a portrait of Marie Geracci. She and her husband, Salvatore Geracci, were from the olive oil man's native place in Italy. He knew all their friends and relatives across the Atlantic.

Quick questions were thrust at him. In a trice it was made clear that Salvatore Geracci was the old man for whom the police were seeking. He had had many occupations—among others, those of tailor, wine merchant, and fruit hawker. The two men and the girl who had been in the flat would be nephews and a niece. But the merchant had no notion how one of his collars had come to be in Geracci's flat. Nor had he any conception where Geracci might be now.

There are very few instances on record of a *known* man escaping the organised search of a great police force. Dougherty knew now exactly whom he had to look for. So he passed the facts on to the Italian squad. Ere long they had discovered a photograph of Geracci and the ship on which he had arrived at New York. Incidentally, they found that the olive oil merchant had reached America three years before Geracci. He had been accompanied by a woman. That part of the case was shadowy, but it provided some hint of a motive, some indication of a sustained purpose and long-deferred vengeance. If the woman who had travelled with the olive oil man had been Marie Geracci . . . There was room for fruitful speculation here. Dougherty pictured the flight of these two across the ocean to achieve fancied security thousands of miles from the man they had wronged.

The immediate thing, however, was to find Geracci and his confederates. An investigation of all the ships that had sailed to Europe, particularly to Mediterranean ports, was begun. The Italian Carabinieri—that picked national police force of Italy—was informed of the crime by cable and requested to take up the hue and cry on their side. As a matter of fact, they met with little difficulty, for in their native place they found the two nephews and the niece and promptly placed them under arrest for complicity in the murder. Of Geracci himself they could find no trace.

Now, although the murder had taken place in the United States, the Italian Government did not surrender the fugitives. As they were its own subjects, it was entitled to try them by Italian law, which it elected to do. But before the trial began the prisoners had broken down and confessed, and copies of their statements were sent to New York.

There was much they did not say—perhaps they did not know the story in all its full detail—but what they had to tell was full of grotesque tragedy. The crime had happened one night after midnight. A fierce quarrel had suddenly flared up between Geracci and his wife. The boys had intervened, and he drove them off with maledictions that cowed and daunted them. Crouched suddering against the wall, they beheld all the terrible business of the murder. Then, when it was over, the frenzied man, of whom they seemed to stand in abject fear, forced them to help him pack the body in a trunk and take it to Connecticut. They had carried it to the lake in a wheelbarrow, and there attempted to sink it by attaching railway fishplates to the trunk.

All this while they were dominated by the threats of the murderer.

At length, after the disposal of the body, Geracci's vigilance relaxed in some degree. They saw an opportunity of escaping. So they fled back to New York and took third-class passages to Naples. Thence they had found their way back to their native village. What had happened to Geracci they did not know.

They were convicted of complicity in a minor degree of the murder and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. That was satisfactory—to a point. The mystery of the murder no longer existed, but there still remained the mystery of Geracci's escape. Until he had been brought to justice Dougherty could not feel his work complete. He spread a wide net. Not a vessel left a United States or Canadian port but a report was sent to New York that the local officers were satisfied that Geracci was not aboard. The Italian squad of New York detectives pressed its inquiries throughout the country. There was no definite clue. It seemed for a while as if the earth had opened and swallowed the hunted man. But the detectives knew that they had only to hold on, and sooner or later he must betray himself or be betrayed.

One little trait they relied on. An Italian consorts with Italians. Wherever Geracci was found he would, in all probability, be among his fellow-countrymen. So, wherever there was a colony of Italians in any town, there search was made. At the same time, the Carabinieri maintained a similar ceaseless hunt in Italy.

The intelligent reader will already have noted the results achieved by the combination of many men upon

one subject. Although Dougherty directed, and in some sense controlled the search, he could never have achieved the same results as an individual. Again the value of co-operation was to be proved. A hint came to the Carabinieri and was flashed over the wires to New York. Geracci was somewhere in Buffalo. Within a very little the fugitive had been located and placed under arrest. After the ordinary formalities he was taken to New York, and there, in police headquarters, Dougherty came face to face for the first time with him. They eyed each other—the hunter and the hunted.

Now, although the case against Geracci was reasonably plain, matters would be simplified if he made a confession. There were some things which Dougherty wanted to know. One cannot spend a lifetime in detective work without gaining some insight into psychology. He had spread over his desk, so that the prisoner could not fail to see them, the reports that had been sent over by the Carabinieri. Each sheet was headed by the Royal Arms of Italy. The roving glance of Geracci rested upon them.

An Italian detective was present as an interpreter. Through this man he quietly invited the prisoner to take a seat. Then he explained his legal rights and read the confessions. Dougherty inclines to the belief that the emblazoned coat-of-arms had a large effect in breaking through the prisoner's restraint.

Suddenly Geracci put his hand to a waistcoat pocket and brought out a crucifix. He held it aloft and sank on his knees by the side of the Deputy Police Commissioner. It was clear, even without the aid of the interpreter, that he desired to confess. He was gently

put back in his seat and with vivid gestures completed the links in the story which was known in part to the detectives.

He and Marie had been children together in Italy. Their fathers owned adjoining vineyards, and it was natural that in the course of time the young man and the girl should fall in love and marry. They were happy for a while. Then there came a day when Marie disappeared, and Geracci learned that she had not gone alone. He swore a bitter vengeance, and time served only to make his resolve the more virulent. It was three years before he learned that his wife and her lover were in the United States. With murder in his heart he sailed for New York. There he earned a living as best he might while he sought for them. Long time passed. His nephews and his niece came to seek their fortune in the New World and made their home with him.

At last, by chance, he fell in with Marie. She was still living under the protection of the man with whom she had eloped, who had established himself as an olive oil merchant and built up a prosperous business. "I was going to kill her on the spot," declared Geracci, "but my love for her was too great. Instead, I embraced her and begged that we should again live happily together. She agreed, if I would spare her lover's life. To this I consented."

Even in the ecstasy of their reunion there were certain prosaic considerations to be faced. Marie returned to her lover's house and packed hurriedly. In her haste one of the olive oil man's collars became entangled with her clothes—this, at least, was the most plausible surmise—and so was ultimately found among the scat-

tered articles on the floor of the flat after the culmination of the tragedy.

The newly united pair were happy for a while. But evil times came and Marie regretted the material comforts she had abandoned. She taunted her husband, and all his jealous suspicions were reawakened. One night he accused her of resuming clandestine meetings with her lover. For answer she spat in his face—the unforgiveable insult to an Italian—and the maddened man choked her to death before the affrighted eyes of his relatives.

It was in his mind to seek out and kill her lover. But his nerve failed, and after the disposal of the body he became a remorseful and haunted man. "That is the whole truth, excellency," he concluded, rising to his feet. "I do not care what happens to me now. You may take me away . . ."

The case was over from the detective's point of view. Geracci was ultimately tried and found guilty of murder in the second degree. He was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TOY LANTERN

TRIM, precise, methodical, Chief Detective-Inspector Henry Marshall held a careful match to his cigar. Not until he was satisfied that the light was evenly applied did he lean back in the big divan chair and regard with inscrutable eyes Sir Melville Macnaghten, the Assistant-Commissioner at the head of the Criminal Investigation Department.

The tall, genial Assistant-Commissioner stirred his coffee slowly. It was his habit to entertain his chief subordinates at his home on occasion. One kept more intimate touch with them over a dinner-table than across a cold official desk. "Old Smith was murdered more than a month ago," he observed, rather as a man making idle observation.

Marshall nodded; he understood the unspoken question. "I hope to have something definite soon. We're on a red-hot trail. A ten-pound note had been paid into the Bank of England. That note was taken from the dead man's safe. If we can trace that back we shall get close to the murderer—or murderers. Nutkins and I will be busy on that first thing in the morning."

Macnaghten pushed a liqueur closer to his guest. "And if that fails?"

"I don't think it will, sir." The Chief Inspector stroked his neat beard. "There's another thing—an anonymous letter—but I'm not inclined to waste time on it just now. We get scores of these things." He

pushed over a dirty half-sheet of notepaper. Scrawled across it in obviously disguised handwriting was a message to this effect :

"Why don't you look up the kid in Southam Street who has a toy?"

"You don't think that there is anything in it?"

"I don't say that, sir." Marshall was a cautious man. "All I feel is that the odds are on the other chance. If that fails we will look into this."

The other offered no comment. He knew his man. Marshall had spent a lifetime in the Criminal Investigation Department, and he had all the traditional qualities of the Scotland Yard man. Behind that serene face, the stern jaw masked by a spruce beard, there lurked energy and resourcefulness. Henry Marshall was as relentless as Fate itself when he took the warpath. There was not the flimsiest trifle that would escape his determined scrutiny.

Already he had spent four weary weeks without result. It all began in this way. In a big, lonely house at Muswell Hill in North London—Muswell Lodge—lived an old retired engineer, Mr. Henry Smith, reputed by local gossip to be a miser, but in reality a harmless old man interested only in his garden and with a great fondness for children. His sole servant was a gardener, who left every evening after setting certain burglar traps about the grounds. Thus old Smith was alone each night.

Early one February morning a white-faced, gasping man broke from the gate of Muswell Lodge at a lumbering trot and roused the neighbours. This was Smith's gardener. He had found the wires of an alarm gun disconnected, and with strung nerves had moved

to the back of the house, where one glance through the kitchen window had sent him headlong for help.

Two or three men accompanied him back to the house. Throwing open the kitchen door—it was unfastened—they saw old Smith in his night-clothes, stretched on the floor, bound hand and foot and lying in a pool of blood. He was gagged, and there were terrible wounds on his head. All about were the signs of a fierce struggle. It was clear that he had been murdered by burglars.

The detective machinery began to move in swift and normal sequence. Nutkins, the divisional detective-inspector, with doctors, draughtsmen, photographers, and other experts were rushed to the spot. The Divisional Inspector, ponderous of body but agile of mind, flung men out in every direction in the hope of picking up some trace of the murderers. To 200 police stations in the Metropolis the wires carried the story of the crime.

It is customary, though not invariable, for Scotland Yard to send down one of its select little band of chief detective-inspectors to handle big murder cases. The dour Marshall stood at the head of the list, and within an hour he was on his way.

Nutkins had been busy checking up, and he was able to indicate to his senior the salient points of the business. In the kitchen sink the murderers had left behind a child's toy lantern and a box of matches. Tools belonging to the dead man were scattered about. There were footprints of two men on the flower-beds. Jemmy marks showed on some of the windows, but the actual entrance had been made through the kitchen window.

Except the kitchen and one other room, the house showed no sign of disturbance. Smith's bedroom, however, had a tale to tell. It had been roughly and thoroughly ransacked. A safe which stood there was open, with the key in the lock and contents strewn about the room. Even the bed had been pulled to pieces and searched. Of actual cash there was none left in the house, although in a basket in the scullery were found a gold watch and other articles of jewellery which had been overlooked by the assassins.

The detectives had no difficulty in reconstructing the crime in broad outline. The old man, they reasoned, had been disturbed by the noise of the burglars in making their entry. He descended to the kitchen, and had there been ferociously attacked and beaten into insensibility. Lest he should revive and raise an alarm, he had been gagged and bound. Then the thieves had found the key of the safe—probably under their victim's pillow—helped themselves to such money as it contained, and made good their escape.

The clues, definite and indefinite, were carefully checked by Marshall. They were :

> The toy lantern. This was of a type manufactured in tens of thousands, with glasses that would enable it to show a red or green light. A wick had been fabricated of some dress material and a piece of pen-holder contrived to keep it in place.
>
> Footprints—one of a large boot with a broad tread, the other of a smaller boot with pointed toe—led across the garden, and there were scratches showing where a back fence had been climbed from which the fugitives could reach a belt of woods behind.
>
> Slightly more than £100 in gold and notes was missing from the safe. In a few hours Marshall had got the numbers of the notes.

The jemmy marks on the windows. Marshall had the windows and their frames taken down and sent to Scotland Yard.

The doctors put the time of the murder at between one and two in the morning. Two men had been seen lurking in the neighbourhood for some days before the murder.

It was the sort of case that might prove very difficult or very simple. Neither Marshall nor Nutkins had much doubt that the crime had been carried through by a pair of desperate low-grade crooks—in all probability men who had been through the hands of the police before. This line looked most promising to them, and with the help of the big Scotland Yard machine they began steadily to weed out those rogues who might have been responsible. Many, it was certain, could not have had a hand in it, but there remained a few others—convicts on licence mainly—who were wanted for failing to report.

Under the British system, it should be explained, prisoners released for good conduct before the expiration of their full sentences are required to report to the police once a month. Practically every C.I.D. man in London was warned to watch for these people. Weeks were spent in following up suspects and testing their whereabouts at the time of the murder. Meanwhile the Bank of England was asked to notify Marshall immediately one of the stolen notes returned to it.

The day following his dinner with Macnaghten, Marshall spent on the trail of the bank-note. He traced it from hand to hand through a City bank, through a firm of tea merchants, through an East End grocer, who had received it from a publican. Here

things came to a halt. The publican, closely questioned, believed that he had taken it from a big, rough-looking customer whose name he did not know and of whom he could only give a vague description.

With philosophy Marshall recognised that he had to start all over again. He got in touch with Macnaghten. "This has fallen down," he reported. "I'm getting on to the half-sheet of notepaper."

For the sake of clearness I have hitherto only broadly indicated the course of the investigation. In most detective stories the hero takes a single clue and works from that down to the culprit. Scotland Yard finds it more simple, as a rule, to run down its man by many apparently disconnected facts, brought to light by many men, leading in the same direction.

Thus I have to introduce another character, a slim, boyish young man, a detective of the X Division, named William Burrell. For a month or two before the murder he had been keeping an eye on one Albert Milsom, a slimy crook with a bad record, who lived in Southam Street in Burrell's district. Now, Milsom had been much in company with Henry Fowler, a convict on licence, a big, immensely strong scoundrel, likely to stick at very little. So, when Burrell recalled that he had not seen either of them from two days preceding the murder till two days afterwards, when both of them were differently dressed, he began to think hard.

He reported the matter and was told to look into it. There was no special reason for suspecting the two men, for reports of other crooks who had also dropped out of sight were beginning to come in. Fowler was wanted for failure to report himself, and

that alone might explain why he was keeping out of the way.

The anonymous letter suggested to Marshall that Burrell might have hit upon the right solution. He, Nutkins, and the young detective went into conference. Milsom's family, Burrell pointed out, lived in Southam Street. Among them was his brother-in-law, a fifteen-year-old lad named Miller, who might well have been interested in the lantern as a plaything.

"The odds are," observed Marshall, "that if the lantern is his he has been warned to deny it if he is questioned. We'll have to surprise any information out of him."

"I'll handle this," said Nutkins. "There may be a way."

With the lantern in his pocket, the fat detective made his way to the neighbourhood of Southam Street. He had no intention of tackling young Miller direct. Burrell had given him some local knowledge, and he went direct to a confectioner's little shop which was patronised by the boys of the district. He took the confectioner into his confidence. The lantern was placed on a shelf, and Nutkins was given a hiding-place.

Hours passed before, at last, young Miller entered the shop on some errand. He at once saw the lantern and reached a hand towards it. "Why, that's mine," he cried.

The well-rehearsed shopkeeper lifted the lantern down. "Yours!" he said. "There are any amount of lanterns like this. How do you know it is yours?"

"It is mine," reiterated Miller. "I can show you the shop where I bought it. The green glass is

cracked. I made a wick out of a bit of stuff my sister gave me when she was making a kid's dress. I used an old pen-holder to hold the wick."

Nutkins had heard enough. He showed himself and took a hand. As he questioned the boy, more came out. He had missed the lantern some weeks before, on a night when Milsom had not slept at home. Milsom had returned at seven o'clock next morning and had said:

"If anyone asks you about your lantern, say you broke it and threw it in the dust-hole."

Nutkins was taking no chances. He had got a witness on whom all might depend. Within an hour the boy was at the local police station, and the grim Marshall, patting him on the back, promised that he should be looked after. So the boy was held apart from his family while the detectives took up the fresh scent in grim and relentless earnest.

Portraits and descriptions of the two men were sent out in every direction. Milsom's relatives were questioned, and Marshall saw that every movement made by each of them, and every letter they received, came under the eye of one of his associates. If the Chief Inspector had not been a patient man he might have ruined everything at this stage. He knew that every day made it more difficult to come up with the fugitives, and yet an attempt to force the pace might defeat its own purpose. He waited, and in a little while he was rewarded.

Young Detective Burrell it was who first picked up the scent. Interviewing Mrs. Milsom on some pretext, he picked a screwed-up envelope from the floor. It bore a Liverpool postmark many weeks old, but

he, Marshall, and Nutkins examined it with interest. They knew that there were few people who corresponded with this lady. It might be a cold scent, but they determined to act upon it. Marshall and some of his merry men made a swift raid on Liverpool.

Luck was with them. They found that the suspects had stayed in Chichester Street, Liverpool. They had apparently been in funds, a significant fact of which Marshall did not fail to take note.

So began a silent and resolute chase all over the country, for Fowler and Milsom had twisted and turned like hunted hares, using different names in different towns, and employing every device that came to them to smother their traces. From Liverpool they had gone to Manchester and thence to Cardiff, where they joined a travelling circus under the names of Taylor and Scott. Fowler did a strong man turn in the show.

Step by step the pursuit followed them, through South Wales to Newport, Pontypool, and Bristol. At Bristol it was found that Milsom had contrived to dodge up to London and bring back his wife and two children, the latter in some manner having managed to elude the watch the police were keeping upon them.

For some time Marshall and his men were baffled at Bristol. Then they picked up the scent, and went on to Swindon, where their quarry had again changed their names to Stevenson and Walsh. Through Chippenham the trail led at last to Bath, and the fugitives were located in lodgings over a shop in Monmouth Street, which they had taken in conjunction with the showman.

All one April Sunday Marshall had outposts about the house. With his characteristic patience the Chief

Inspector waited to make sure before he betrayed his presence. He wanted not one man but two, and he left Burrell to determine when they were both in the trap. It was eleven o'clock at night before Burrell signalled that all was ready. A wait of a matter of minutes ensued, while hasty assurance was made by Marshall that the police surrounding the place were on the alert. A sergeant of the Bath police was the first to thrust the door of the room open, and, in spite of his bulk, Detective-Inspector Nutkins was hard behind, a revolver in his hand.

"We are police officers. Hands up!" he cried, and dashed at Milsom.

In the dim light of a flickering oil lamp, the other officers made for the various people in the room. Milsom sagged in limp terror, without lifting a hand, as he was seized. He and his wife and the showman were led almost unresisting from the room.

Not so Fowler. He uttered a snarling imprecation as Marshall sprung at him, and swung a blow with the whole of his enormous strength. A quick swerve saved the detective, but his hat was ruined.

Let me tell the story in Marshall's own words:

"I made for Fowler. The room was poorly lighted, quite a simple gleam of the lamp, and he could not see very much. I seized Fowler, and another officer or two seized him instantly. He became most desperate. He aimed a blow which caught me across the top of the hat I was wearing, smashed it, and I think I smashed his. There was a general row. He nearly swayed some of us down. I drew my revolver and struck him across the head with it. Nutkins presented a loaded revolver, but that seemed to have no effect. As a last resort I

struck him with an unloaded revolver, I think, two or three times, on the forehead. He fell down eventually, and we got the handcuffs on him."

So they got the wild beast senseless, but still untamed, to the hospital. The following day he was taken to the local police station, where he fiercely denied the charge. His ferocious resistance, he declared, was due to the fact that he was drunk.

The showman and Mrs. Milsom were released, and the two men were brought to London, where the proceedings against them were marked by many bizarre incidents. As the case built up by Marshall was coldly unfolded, Milsom became aghast at his peril. In contrast with the tigerish and reckless Fowler, who held himself undaunted in the shadow of the gallows, his mean spirit was reduced to abject terror. One course presented itself as a means of saving his neck. He sent for Marshall and made a confession, laying the blame for the actual murder on Fowler.

This confession came as a thunderbolt to Fowler. As he stood in the police court dock and listened to the level voice of the Chief Inspector repeating Milsom's words, his face blazed with wrath. Milsom, with sunken, bloodshot eyes on the face of his companion, shrank away in an ecstasy of terror. The precaution that had been taken of putting a big policeman between in the narrow dock, probably alone saved him at that moment.

An hour later Fowler asserted that Milsom had taken an active part in the murder. The big ruffian had seen all hope of evading justice depart from him, and his one thought now was revenge on his confederate.

At the Old Bailey one of the most amazing scenes

ever witnessed in a court of law took place when the jury retired to consider their verdict. The face of Fowler, set and impassive till that moment, changed suddenly to an expression of diabolical fierceness. With a quick, unexpected lunge he leapt across the dock, his hands outstretched, seeking the throat of his accomplice.

Milsom squealed like a scared rabbit, and threw himself to the floor. A warder, with extraordinary quickness and presence of mind, shot out an arm, to intercept Fowler, and succeeded in preventing him from getting more than one hand on Milsom. But for that it is likely that nothing could have saved the other.

The gaoler, still clinging tenaciously to the arm he had grasped, was dragged down upon the top of the two men, and other warders and police came to his assistance, some climbing over the 6 ft. front of the dock. The chairs in the dock were smashed like matchwood, and the glass panels which guarded its sides fell splintered to the ground. Somehow they dragged Milsom away, dazed and trembling, down the dock steps and out of the court. As he saw his hope of vengeance thwarted, Fowler fought with eager desperation to free himself from the grip of the eight or nine men who were now clinging to him. By a supreme effort he pulled himself to his feet, fighting with the ferocity of a maddened animal. For one fleeting instant it looked as if he might succeed in freeing himself and reaching the door of the court. From one end of the dock to the other he rushed, practically carrying his assailants with him, and they were men of no mean strength and size. Then they again pulled him to the ground, and this time numbers prevailed. Handcuffs

were forced on him, and he was taken to the cells cursing Milsom venomously.

In a little while the jury were back, and the two prisoners, strongly guarded, were returned to the dock, Fowler sneering and defiant, Milsom a quivering bundle of terror. As the verdict of guilt was pronounced, Milsom feverishly protested his innocence, and with an insolent laugh Fowler mimicked him.

Later he made a full confession, in which he saw to it that the rope was securely tied round Milsom's neck.

The jury wrote a memorial commending the detectives, and the judge went out of the way to express his admiration of the manner in which the investigation had been carried through.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BRANTLEY AFFAIR

PROBABLY no one was more astonished than Deputy-Sheriff Simmons when he found himself plunged into an atmosphere of romance and murder that would have done credit to the invention of a melodramatic novelist. For Simmons wore baggy trousers, tucked into high boots, a battered broad-brimmed hat, an untidy beard, and expectorated when he thought he would. He was not in the least like a great detective. Yet when the event arose he showed that he had qualities.

The prologue was a murder that is only incidental to this story. John Brantley was the dissolute, ne'er-do-well son of a wealthy Alabama planter. At forty years of age he had quarrelled bitterly with his family, and was living with the beautiful and fascinating woman he had married on a small plantation near his father's estate at Selma, Alabama. Among his neighbours was a young man named John Howard, between whom and Brantley there was a fierce dislike arising out of matters connected with the family feud. Both men were known to go armed, and there came a day in the spring of 1869 when Howard was found shot dead in a swamp at no considerable distance from Brantley's house. Brantley was arrested on suspicion, but was released on some technical point, and immediately fled a hundred miles over the border of the adjoining State of Mississippi.

In the little village of Shuqualak he remained for

over a year, subsisting on such sums as were sent him by his wife, whose letters breathed constant solicitude for his welfare and safety. It is a strange fact that, although both he and his wife were known to certain people in the district, it was not realised that he was a fugitive from justice.

During the early morning hours of December 4, 1870, Brantley went to Shuqualak Railway Station, and mentioned that he was expecting his wife by the first train. He sat in a chair before a fire and went to sleep. From the platform without someone took deliberate aim at the sleeping man with a shot-gun and pulled the trigger. Brantley was instantly killed.

The local sheriff took charge of the case and found a letter on the body from Mrs. Brantley arranging to meet her husband at the station. She had obviously not kept the appointment, and he telegraphed to Simmons at Macon, the next station, to know if she was there. Simmons lost no time over the niceties of toilet. He slipped across to the one hotel the town boasted and discovered that Mrs. Brantley had arrived by the early train. He also discovered a fellow-passenger, who said that the woman had peered out of the train at Shuqualak and asked for her husband. There had been no reply, and she had gone on to Macon. This passenger expressed the decided view that she was drunk.

In fact, she was under the influence of morphine and chloral, for she was a confirmed drug-taker. Here I must pause to introduce Mrs. Minerva Brantley, who is described as "of that rare type of personal beauty found only in those possessing a fair complexion, light golden hair, and lustrous black eyes. In features and

form she was strikingly beautiful, brilliant in conversation, fascinating in her manners, and of a very affectionate disposition."

Her charms had no influence on the dour Simmons, who had no scruples in roughly arousing her and ordering her to accompany him to Shuqualak. She made a half-dazed protest, but he would take no denial nor afford any explanation. She dressed, and as they drove out to the scene of the tragedy she asked if her husband had been arrested. Then she was told that he had been killed.

"She made an effort to cry," said Simmons dryly, "but did not shed many tears. She said that she had always told Mr. Brantley that if he was killed or captured it would be at a time when she was going to him. She talked of her affairs at home, saying that she was left in a bad condition; that Mr. Brantley was always writing to her for money and that she did not have any to send him; that he had written to her to come and see him, and she was afraid to stay away. Apparently her husband's death was the least of her troubles. I asked her if she had any idea who did the deed. She answered that she had not; that she could not think of anyone who had animosity enough against him to kill him."

Simmons noted that she did not appear deeply concerned at the murder. She refused to see the body, and he put her in charge of a friend while he tried to pick up the trail.

This small town police officer acted with the acumen of a Scotland Yard man, combined with the skill of an Indian tracker. There were people in Shuqualak who had noted the arrival at about ten

o'clock the previous night of a stranger on a fine grey horse. This man had hitched his horse to a fence, and been seen lurking near the station with a blanket over his shoulders that did not entirely conceal the double-barrelled gun he carried. Simmons obtained a close description of the horse, and examined its tracks. Then he went back to Mrs. Brantley.

He bluntly told her that there were suspicions against her because of her assignation with her husband. Why, he asked, had she gone on to Macon instead of remaining at Shuqualak when she did not see her husband? He got no reply to this question.

Rising abruptly, he announced that he would have to leave her for a time. I quote Mr. Simmons again: "She eagerly asked where I was going. I replied that I was going to capture the murderer. She looked frightened, and pleadingly implored me not to go and leave her all alone in such a condition. I told her I would have to go.

"She asked if I had any idea who the person was. I said I had not. I added that if it was a friend of hers she must tell me and I would know how to proceed. She replied: 'Mr. Simmons, I cannot say.' I then left her."

With a couple of men well mounted, Simmons set off literally "on the trail." The track showed that the horse had a worn shoe on the near forefoot, and that after the murder it had been urged at a lope in an easterly direction. Simmons directed a steady, unrelenting pursuit, for his inquiries had taken up the greater part of the day and there remained scarce a couple of hours' daylight.

There were checks here and there where the im-

prints of the horse's hoofs were faint on hard ground. Generally, however, the pursuers moved at speed, "for," said Simmons, "I became so familiar with the track that I could recognise it at a glance." By the time that night fell their hopes rose high as they observed that the tracks halted at a house by the roadside. The rider, however, had only stayed long enough for a brief rest and refreshment. Simmons and his party pushed on.

They knew now that they were gaining on the fugitive, for more than once they fell in with people who had met him still headed east. A piece of luck was a bright moon, which enabled them to still keep an eye on the tracks. They crossed into Alabama, and at the small town of Gainesville paused to rest and feed their horses. There was no rest, however, for the indefatigable Simmons. He nosed around and found that the fugitive had crossed the Bigbee River by a ferry at this point.

Reinforced by two local residents who volunteered to accompany the party, they started again. Just over the river they met a negro who had noticed the man on the grey horse dismount at some plantation buildings six miles away. This negro was taken behind one of the riders, and guided them to a house some hundreds of yards off the road. Up to this point they had ridden more than thirty-four miles in their determined pursuit.

Dismounting, they cautiously approached the house, which was that of a plantation overseer. In a stable they found a fine grey horse which showed signs of having been ridden hard. Simmons lifted the left forefoot and examined a badly worn shoe.

The overseer was quietly awakened and brought out of the house. He described the stranger who had awakened him and asked for hospitality for a few hours. At that instant the man was probably asleep. His room door was bolted.

Simmons was not inclined to take unnecessary risks in arresting an armed and probably desperate murderer. He outlined a ruse. The overseer knocked at his guest's door to ask for some medicine which was supposed to be in the room. As the fugitive unbolted and threw open the door, strong arms seized him, and Simmons announced that he was under arrest. The prisoner protested indignantly.

"What right have you to arrest me?"

"You are the man who killed Brantley at Shuqualak, and we are going to take you back there," retorted Simmons.

The other countered by a demand for authority by which he was to be taken from one State to another. It was a nice point, for, by strict law, extradition formalities were necessary.

Simmons was not the man to stand on niceties, however. "My authority is main strength," he declared grimly. "I am going to take you back dead or alive."

The prisoner argued no more. By his bedside was a gun still loaded with buckshot in one barrel, and a couple of double-barrelled revolvers. These were packed up, and, with the prisoner in their midst, the captors started on the long ride back to Shuqualak. On the way he admitted that his name was Joseph Eskridge, and, although he protested that he had not killed Brantley, he made the odd remark: "Woman,

woman, this kind heart of mine has brought me to where I am."

Having seen his prisoner safely in gaol at Shuqualak, Simmons took some much-needed rest. For more than twenty-four hours he had undergone a physical and mental strain that would have been impossible to a less hardy man. In a few hours he was astir again, trying to piece together the links against Eskridge.

Selma, where the Brantley's had lived, seemed a likely spot to begin his investigations. There was no trouble in finding evidence of a motive. Eskridge had lived near Mrs. Brantley, and within a year of her husband's flight their relations had become a matter of local gossip—so much so that relatives had protested to Eskridge about the scandal. This came to Mrs. Brantley's ears, and had drawn from her an indignant letter declaring that she had been slandered and that her husband was aware of and fully approved of all her actions.

As a fact, Brantley knew Eskridge, and put implicit trust in him. Although he received information of the intrigue, he refused to believe it. He even went the length of giving Eskridge power of attorney to deal with some of his business affairs.

Quite a number of letters that had been written by Mrs. Brantley to her husband were discovered by Simmons and his associates. They were framed with affectionate loquacity and, up till the summer of 1870, urged him to run no risks. "It makes one miserable to think what a lonely life you have to live, and I am determined to share your future with you after this summer, come what may. I long for the time when I

shall be able to sell out here and leave this hateful country for ever. . . ." Then there came a change in her tone. She was no longer anxious for his seclusion. She told him that it was the general belief that a negro had murdered Howard. "Everybody thinks that you are cleared for good."

This subtle change in her attitude did not escape Simmons. He sought a reason for it and found one. Both Mrs. Brantley and Eskridge had become short of money, and they had devised a means of killing two birds with one stone. They insured the life of Brantley for $20,000 (£4,000), although, of course, the insurance companies did not know that the subject of the insurance was a man wanted for murder.

After this insurance had been effected, Eskridge went to the District Attorney, who is the local Public Prosecutor in America, and suggested that the brother and brother-in-law of Howard should be informed that if they would go to a certain hotel on a particular day they would meet a man who would assist them to find and arrest Brantley. Eskridge's own name was to be kept out of the affair. The District Attorney agreed, and the appointment was made.

Simmons discovered that Mrs. Brantley had been waiting in the vicinity and that Eskridge had immediately rejoined her on leaving the District Attorney. He put two and two together. Those were rough-and-ready days in a rough-and-ready country. If Eskridge merely desired the arrest of Brantley, it could have been arranged without the presence of Howard's relatives. He judged that the intention was to provoke Brantley to offer resistance and to make sure that he was shot down in the struggle. The thing would have

looked natural. It was a pretty plot, and if it had come off it would have been worth $20,000 to Eskridge and Mrs. Brantley.

The suspicion that Mrs. Brantley had connived at her husband's murder became confirmed in the Deputy-Sheriff's mind. He determined to prove it beyond a doubt. So he found that Eskridge had, a few days before the murder, departed from home on the pretext of a holiday for reasons of health. He had ridden away on a grey horse. On the same day Mrs. Brantley departed for an unknown destination by train.

Now, the letter to Brantley from his wife, arranging a meeting at Shuqualak Railway Station had been headed "At Home," but the postmark showed that it had been despatched from Demopolis. Demopolis was a small town about twenty-seven miles from Selma, and thither Simmons went.

Almost at once he picked up traces at one of the local hotels. A "Mr. and Mrs. Eskridge" had stayed there for a night and had then left for Livingstone. They had driven over, accompanied by a boy who rode the man's grey horse.

At Livingstone things grew plainer. They had stayed there for two nights and a day as man and wife, and during that time they had gone out together to purchase a double-barrelled shot-gun. The lady was described as tall and slender, with black eyes, fair complexion, and light hair. She remarked that the gun was a very nice one and would do.

On the morning of December 3 they drove to Gainesville, where there was a railway station. They remained together for a while, but at about three in the afternoon Eskridge left Mrs. Brantley at an hotel

under her own name, while he himself inquired the way to Shuqualak and rode off. As I have said, there were several people who saw him that evening lurking about the neighbourhood of Shuqualak. Thus there was a fairly conclusive case against him.

There remained Mrs. Brantley. Many hours later, at about three or four in the morning, she boarded the train to Shuqualak. The remainder of her movements before and shortly after the murder were known to Simmons. He decided to act. Eskridge had already been committed for trial, and the Deputy-Sheriff applied for and obtained a warrant for the woman's arrest.

She had gone to stay with a friend in a village some miles from Shuqualak. When the officers arrived to arrest her she was in bed, clearly suffering from the effects of excessive drug-taking. But she was conscious, and her hand reached feebly beneath her pillow. One of the officers was too quick for her, and he seized a small pocket Smith and Wesson revolver.

For a week or two she remained in bed under guard until such time as she was fit to be moved. Then she was handed over to Simmons. She drew him quietly aside and remarked earnestly: "Mr. Simmons, I will never forgive you for this."

"For what?" he asked. "For bringing Joe Eskridge back?"

"Yes," she said.

It was a touch which even the reserved officer, knowing what he knew, could not stomach. "You need not blame me," he retorted. "You knew as much about this business before I got him as you do now."

To that there was no reply. Mrs. Brantley had begun to realise her position. But she made no concealment of her concern for Eskridge. She asked if he had made any admission, and sighed with relief when told that he had not.

A curious wave of public feeling existed in her favour, and, oddly enough, the magistrates before whom she was brought attached so little importance to the case against her that they released her on bail of $1,000 (about £200). She was an attractive woman, and the dead man was a waster. What was a little thing like murder?

This woman was a strange mixture of astuteness and simplicity. Her mind was exercised to arrange Eskridge's escape, and as soon as she was certain of bail she wrote him a lengthy letter. This she handed, unsealed, to an officer to give to him, and, not unnaturally, he read it and made a copy.

With hysterical fervency she repeated such phrases as "My heart's idol," "My own precious one," "Best of God's creation," in almost every other line. But there were more significant passages. "You shall be released, *cost what it may*. . . . I am fearful I will have to sue for my insurance before I get that money. . . . You must destroy every letter I write to you, for it would ruin us for ever if they should be found. . . . When first you leave here, my darling, you must be so cautious and prudent in travelling. I would not go where there are telegraphs. You will have to disguise yourself completely. . . . If you stay here and stand a trial, I am so fearful they will do the worst they can against you."

The strange thing was that, knowing of this letter,

the authorities did not take any particular precautions. One day the cell of Eskridge was mysteriously vacant. He had vanished and no one knew how. So far Mrs. Brantley had succeeded in outwitting Simmons.

The administration of the law in the Southern States of America was a little loose in those days. There was no particular surprise when the proceedings against Mrs. Brantley were quietly dropped. With ingenuous impudence she at once started proceedings for the payment of the insurance claims.

This was a mistake. The insurance companies were not inclined to allow themselves to be robbed of £4,000 in this fashion. They brought very efficient machinery to bear on the case, and with the help of Simmons they made the whole tragic story clear. The beautiful Mrs. Brantley realised that she had stirred up a hornet's nest. There came a day when she was missing. All efforts to find her were without avail, and she was never made amenable for the crime which it is reasonably certain she instigated.

A hue and cry after Eskridge was more successful. Simmons and others followed him up pertinaciously, and he was finally run to earth in Texas and brought back to take his trial. Ultimately he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

One who had close knowledge of the facts makes dry comment on the sequel: "That the extreme penalty of the law would have been carried into effect there is no reasonable doubt, but during the Governor's temporary absence from the State a pardon was obtained from the negro Lieutenant-Governor. It is generally believed that a bribe of $500 (£100) was the price paid for Eskridge's pardon. We have no

positive evidence that such, or any sum, was paid. Our only reason for discrediting such a rumour is that so large a sum as $500 dollars was regarded as necessary to purchase a pardon from the official who granted it."

No doubt Deputy-Sheriff Simmons expectorated cynically.

CHAPTER XV

SEEING MR. JOHNSON HOME

A GREAT deal of hard work was ruined when a whisper reached the Old Jewry—which, as everyone knows, is the Scotland Yard of the city of London—that a big coup was under way by which Messrs. Drexel, Morgan and Company, the great bankers, were to be plundered of £50,000 or maybe a bit more. One has to be tactful in guessing whence this whisper may have come. Certainly someone was incautious, whether by design or accident. At once the Old Jewry became unostentatiously busy.

The broad details of the scheme were soon learned. Letters of credit in the name of the bankers were being forged, and were to be presented simultaneously at various places on the Continent—Liège, Madrid, Marseilles, Coblenz, and other places at which Drexel, Morgan and Company had correspondents. In essentials plots of this kind had been carried out before, and, given absolute secrecy and a good imitation of the bank paper, there was no reason why it should not be successful. It had one defect. If a hint leaked out, the activities of the police were likely to lead perilously near the real author. There were then, as there are now, very few people who were capable of conceiving such a plan; there were fewer still who had the organising power and the technical skill required to put it into operation.

This was one of those cases in which no experienced

detectives would waste time among the small fry of the underworld. The Old Jewry men looked up the records. They were unanimous in electing Mr. George Johnson to the distinction of the head and brain of the gang. They had no shred of proof that would have satisfied a judge and jury. It was just that Mr. Johnson obviously fitted the rôle. He had those qualities of dexterous craftsmanship, knowledge of banking methods, flexible cunning, and supreme caution that marked him to the detectives as plainly as if they had found his visiting-card. There were just two things to be done. Firstly, Mr. Johnson had to be found; secondly, some kind of proof that he had act or part in the business had to be obtained. Neither of these was likely to prove very simple.

Two men believed to have had a hand in the affair were rounded up on the Continent—one calling himself "Lord Fairfax" at Liège, another man at Madrid. But these were only minor actors in the piece. Indeed, it was by no means sure that they would be convicted. You must understand that the police were not in a position to show that there had been any plot at all, whatever they might feel. The whole of their case depended upon finding Johnson, locating the headquarters of the gang, and, in the phrase of the force, "getting the goods on them."

This end was turned over to Detective-Inspector Harry Cox. Cox was a man of resource, as he demonstrated when he observed a "wizz mob" at work on the person of a relative of a Judge of the High Court in Fleet Street. He shifted his position until he became one of the group, and, holding out his hand, had thrust into it the gold watch of the victim. Only when

he was gripped by a strong hand did the "main dip" realise that there had been a mischance. The affair was complicated because the victim accused Cox of the robbery, and it was only at the police station that the true facts of the case were borne upon him. I mention this little matter, not because it has any bearing on my story, but because it shows what sort of a man Cox was.

It was Cox, too, who at a later date arrested Samuel Herbert Dougal while he was trying to cash some notes at the Bank of England, and had a dramatic chase in the City streets when his prisoner eluded him.

"This is a special job," McWilliam, the bearded head of the City detective force, told him. "You have got to get hold of this man Johnson, however long it takes. The whole of the investigation will really hinge on you."

As a matter of fact, it took Cox a couple of months. There was really nothing to guide the young detective except the belief that Johnson was somewhere in London. He might be any one of millions of people, for there was no photograph of recent date and no outstanding physical peculiarities by which he could be recognised. In such circumstances there is usually only one hope—the informant.

On this part of the case I must confess that my information is shadowy. There are phases of criminal investigation which are never set down in black and white. Somehow, somewhere, Cox got on the track of a man who knew a little of Johnson and his methods—not much, for even the closest confederates of the forger chief were kept at arms' length by him. Not the least of Cox's difficulties was the dread that this

man had of the vengeance that might be inflicted upon him by Johnson and his gang when it became known that he had betrayed them. This timidity was to cause some trouble at a later stage. What means of persuasion were adopted to overcome it can only be surmised. They were successful, at any rate. Even at that, all the informant could do was to indicate Johnson and leave the rest to the police.

From this source it was learned that Johnson was at times to be seen in Bacon Street, Spitalfields. At this place Cox, in a series of disguises, spent long hours with the other for many weeks. At long last a glimpse of the forger was obtained.

Now, as I have indicated, George Johnson was a man far beyond the mental calibre of the ordinary crook. He had the coolness and the quick brain of a general. While the full resources of one of the big detective organisations of London were being strained to find him, he had in his leisure time thoroughly enjoyed himself in his own way. He was a polished rogue educated beyond the ordinary degree, and he had the tastes of a cultured man. The very finest restaurants of the West End were good enough for him, for he had a delicate palate for good wine and perfect food. No doubt, too, he had a sensuous delight in his surroundings.

This trait, this habit, was not merely reckless bravado. He had to eat somewhere, and these places, from his point of view, were as safe as anywhere else. True he did not know that any hint of his operations had leaked out, but he would probably have acted no differently if he had. His patronage was divided among half a dozen of the most exclusive restaurants, and it

was unlikely that a well-dressed, well-mannered man who was not ungenerous to the waiters would arouse any suspicion. I do not think, in fact, that the Old Jewry people ever troubled about the West End. They had no reason to suppose that it would be any easier to find Johnson there than elsewhere.

Johnson had habituated himself to the practice of an elaborate caution. He was as alert and wary as a fox. He trusted no one completely. Even those of his confederates with whom he was in the most intimate and constant association did not know where he lived. They would receive an intimation that he would be at some place—usually a railway station—at a particular time, and there he would hand over instructions and receive reports. From behind a newspaper he would study the faces of those people who travelled with him and impress them on his memory. Should he observe a person he had seen before he would at the earliest opportunity strike off at a tangent on a series of erratic and ingenious movements designed to baffle the most pertinacious of shadowers.

Cox knew that every trick of which he had knowledge would be needed if he was not to be shaken off. A vigilant person always has an advantage over a shadower, for which reason "observation" is the most difficult and wearying of all the arts of the detective. When the detective first glimpsed his quarry he was dressed as a labouring man. That is to say, that he had on a labouring man's clothes. He was unshaven, his hair was untidy, and he wore a knotted muffler round his throat. As I have before insisted in the course of these articles, a detective very seldom assumes an artificial disguise in the sense of using stage

make-up. Johnson would not have known Cox in his proper person. The aim of the latter was simply to appear as anything but a detective—to harmonise so closely with his surroundings that he would not be noticed.

As soon as Johnson emerged from Bacon Street, Cox strolled to a doorway and found some difficulty in lighting a pipe. The forger jumped on an omnibus, but following his scheme of strategy, descended before it had gone more than a few hundred yards, and cast a swift though apparently casual glance about him. If he saw the burly labourer, who at last had got his pipe to draw, he paid no attention.

When he hailed another omnibus, Cox, who had taken a chance, was already aboard. Thus they travelled together to the Underground station in Bishopsgate Street, where Johnson took train, the unobtrusive labourer in the same carriage with him. At Hammersmith it was the latter who got out first. Johnson was rather more concerned with the people who followed rather than with those who preceded him out of the carriage. Thus, several minutes which he spent in scrutinising the passengers were wasted. Cox was very clumsy in taking his place at the booking-office for a fresh ticket, and so it befell that he was jostled out of his turn. This piece of manœuvring enabled him to hear his man book to Richmond.

At that Thames-side resort the detective again followed out the tactics that had enabled him to elude notice at Hammersmith. He was the first person out of the train, confident that since Richmond is a terminus for Underground trains, the other would have to follow him. Had Johnson devoted less attention to his

rear he might have noticed his wily attendant. As it was, he hung about until the platform was clear, and then crossed over to the South-Western station, and took a ticket to Twickenham. The discreet Cox kept well out of sight meantime. But when the Twickenham train started he was safely aboard.

It was here that Johnson was very nearly successful in giving him the slip. Cox, seated at a window seat in an adjoining compartment, this time waited for his quarry to alight. But the seconds passed and Johnson made no move. The detective peered anxiously through the window wondering whether he had after all been outwitted. The forger might have had no intention of going to Twickenham. His real destination might be somewhere quite different. There was nothing to do but wait and see. The train began to move slowly out when Johnson opened the door of his compartment and jumped. Taken by surprise, Cox also made a flying leap. Neglect of the old proverb nearly spoiled everything, for he crashed heavily against a pillar and sprawled at full length on the platform. But at that moment Johnson was in a hurry, for he had to hasten to catch an up-train from another platform. He was doubling on his tracks.

Pulling himself up, Cox managed to reach the other platform just in time. Detectives are not supposed to suffer from nerves, but Cox admitted that at this moment a sense of responsibility hung heavily upon him. The chase could not go on indefinitely. Unless it ended soon he would either lose his man or Johnson would become aware of him. The result would be much the same in either case. Certain it was that Johnson, once he realised that he was under surveil-

lance, would put two and two together. It would be long odds then that he would see to it that all the evidence the police hoped to get by surprising him would be gone before they could act.

The next stop to Twickenham was St. Margaret's. When Cox saw the forger alight and make deliberate scrutiny of those on the platform, he hurried by and down the long flight of steps that led from the platform. A little distance from the bottom he halted to make sure. He saw the boots of Johnson as the latter commenced to descend. Cox promptly made for the street to find a point of vantage. He had decided to alter his tactics. A man may be shadowed from the front among a number of people, but in quiet suburban streets such a method has obvious disadvantages. It was now necessary to let Johnson get such a start as would make stalking from behind possible. Cox had an intuition that the end of the quest was near. But he had all the more reason to be careful.

He sought refuge in the public bar of a near-by public-house and ordering a tankard of bitter, which he did not really want, kept his eyes fixed on the glass panels of the door to observe the direction taken by his quarry. The minutes passed. As he absorbed his drink a little frown grew on his forehead. He put down the empty tankard and, going outside, looked about him. There was no sign of Johnson.

"I need not tell you," he said later, "that I felt anxious. The whole case rested on me. The heads of my department were ready to act as soon as Johnson's place of residence could be discovered." The hitch was the more exasperating as the thing had been carried so far. Cox walked slowly backwards and for-

wards for a hundred yards on each side of the road, every sense alert for the faintest trace of Johnson. There could be no doubt that he had at last been thrown off the scent. Yet with a vague impression that something might turn up, he continued to haunt the neighbourhood. There was the chance that Johnson had after all slipped back to the station and taken a train elsewhere—playing a variation of the trick that had almost been successful at Twickenham. Cox, however, had an intuition that it was not so. It was in his mind that the forger lived somewhere in the district. In that case he must sooner or later appear again at the station. Cox hung on—a forlorn hope.

Luck favoured him. His apparently futile vigil had lasted three-quarters of an hour when a man emerged from a public library opposite the public-house. The detective gave one incredulous glance and at once became engrossed in contemplation of the window of a shop which was fitted with opportune mirrors. For the figure on the library steps was Johnson. The trail had been regained.

Humming happily to himself, Cox followed his man at a discreet distance. Johnson looked back once or twice, but the burly labourer was never conspicuous. So they came at last to a serene, very quiet suburban street—Beaconsfield Road. Along the stretch of pavement bordering the trim and austere villas there was no single person. Cox felt that to show himself there would be to court discovery by his quarry. However effective a disguise his costume might be in the East End, it was calculated to attract attention in the respectable hinterland of St. Margaret's. He paused, therefore, shielded by a baker's cart which was drawn

up at the top of the street. The baker, emerging from a house with a basket on his arm, regarded the rough-looking labourer with unconcealed suspicion.

"It's all right, guv'nor," explained Cox. "I'm only tying up my shoe-lace."

The baker was probably unconvinced, but that did not concern Cox. While he still fumbled with his shoe-lace his gaze was fixed on Johnson, who had come to a halt halfway down the street to look about him once more. Then he entered a gate—of which house Cox could not be precisely certain—and walked backwards with a curious crab-like motion up the garden path.

Cox felt that he had done enough for the day. He straightened himself up, turned on his heels, and walked briskly back to the station and took a train to Town. At the Old Jewry he made his report, and plans were laid for the next day.

Had anyone noticed the slouching, unshaven labourer they would not have identified him with the spruce and neat clerk-like looking person who, with evening paper and umbrella complete, was in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield Road the following evening. The neighbourhood was full of such people. At just the time that Johnson reached the top of the road, Cox started to walk from the other end. The detective's calculations were a trifle out, for they did not meet opposite Johnson's house. But a painter lurched across the road and asked Cox the time. The latter was awkward in getting at his watch, and by that time Johnson had vanished into his house.

"I have the number," said the clerk to the painter. "We will raid the place to-night."

Late that night, long after most of the respectable inhabitants of St. Margaret's were in bed, a half-dozen men sauntered to strategic points in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield Road. Johnson was abruptly roused from his slumbers by a peremptory summons at the door, and within a minute or two, half-dressed, he was confronting a couple of stern-faced men.

"We are police officers, Johnson," said one of them, "and we hold a warrant to search this house."

Neither blusterings nor protests had any effect. The forger was put under guard, and the detectives went over the house from top to bottom. If they did not then find all they hoped, they found enough, for it was through this raid that they discovered the working headquarters of the gang to be in the Kingsland Road, Hoxton. At this latter place there was clear evidence of the operations of the forgers, including a number of forged letters of credit, which were so close to the genuine notes issued by Drexel, Morgan and Co. that they could only be detected as forgeries by a slight difference in the letter "o."

Johnson was charged. So also was a man named Phillips who was his most trusted aide. Then it was that Cox found himself beset by a new trouble. His informant, whose evidence was necessary on certain points, became more restive than ever after the arrests. Suddenly he bolted. Cox traced him to Rouen, but the man was resolute in his determination not to return to this country. He was in great danger, he declared. There were friends of Johnson who had sworn to have his life. All the ingenuity and tact of the detective were required to overcome his fears. In fact, the officer may have felt that there was some substance in the man's

dread, for he agreed that the latter should be furnished with a guard of detectives night and day.

The compact was scrupulously observed. Plain clothes men stayed with him at his hotel, but his fears increased rather than lessened, and Cox at last took him into his own house for a week. There was a guard upon the house, and Cox, who was concerned not to lose an important witness again, slept in his clothes in case of accidents.

When the trial at last finished and Johnson and Phillips were each sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, the informant, still believing that he was likely to be shot, was escorted by Cox to Dover and seen out of the country.

The rest of the gang were rounded up in various places, and though there was not evidence against all of them, they were driven out of the forgery business —at least, in this country. Cox's friend, the informant, did not suffer from their vengeance. Indeed, he got into a little trouble of his own on the Continent, and dodged back to this country. One day he came face to face with Cox in the Borough. There was a struggle, but the detective won, and his former guest was ultimately extradited and sentenced abroad to a term of imprisonment.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MARK OF "S"

FREDERICK WENSLEY is not a talkative man. He speaks with blunt vigour and stops when he has finished. And his mind works in something of this direct fashion. He goes straight to the heart of a matter. He disregards the non-essentials so completely that I am inclined to think he does not notice them. So far as he is concerned they do not exist. One bludgeon stroke and they are gone.

Wensley is now the supreme detective of London—the Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department—but he has not forgotten how to tear his way to the core of a problem. The 900 detectives of London know that it is with Wensley that they will have to settle if they fail too frequently. He has played the game from the bottom up, and he cannot be bluffed. His recreation is criminal hunting. He has to eat and sleep, but apart from that his whole mind is for ever concentrated on his job.

Since I first knew him he has shaved his moustache, and a long nose stands out of his lean face like the beak of some predatory bird. Before he came to headquarters he had spent the bulk of his official life in the H Division—the worst section of the East End of London—and there he was brought into contact at close quarters with some of the roughest and most desperate crooks in the world. He learned to handle them without kid gloves.

When Wensley was Divisional Detective-Inspector of the H Division, he was a man marked for high rank in the service. His closest rival for promotion was Alfred Ward, of the W Division, which includes a big stretch of the better-class suburbs of London. Had a Zeppelin bomb not dropped on Ward's house—but that is another story.

In some ways Ward was a complete contrast to his colleague. He had a round, ruddy face that narrowly escaped being cherubic by the addition of a heavy, dark moustache. He looked like a tradesman who took an interest in his local church affairs. But behind an equanimity that was proof against any shock he concealed an always fresh professional enthusiasm. He would stick to a tangled case with grim tenacity and bring it to a conclusion by some bold and daring coup that robbed it of all touch of melodrama. As so often happens with the leading Scotland Yard men, he had an odd way of attracting the respect of many of those he ran down. They seemed unable to resist his combination of good temper and matter-of-factness.

It was queer that these two men—the ablest in the C.I.D.—should have been thrown together on one of the most singular murder mysteries which London has known.

As the light dawned one New Year's morning, a policeman patrolling Clapham Common came across the body of a man concealed beneath a bush. Murder was obvious. There had been blows on the head, and he had been stabbed three times in the chest. On each cheek there were knife-marks which roughly resembled the letter S.

Ward was at breakfast when the news came to him.

He abandoned his coffee and eggs, and a car carried him swiftly to the Common. The Scotland Yard machine had already been set in motion, and a divisional surgeon was bending over the body.

Some part of the story was clear almost at a glance. There were signs that the body had been dragged face downwards from a footpath eight or ten yards away. A black silk handkerchief with red stripes was over the dead man's head. Another handkerchief was lying beneath the hip. In the pockets were a single copper coin—this pointed to robbery—a paper bag containing a partly eaten ham sandwich, and a cheap notebook with the entries of trifling sums of money against some foreign names.

The doctor said that death must have taken place at about three in the morning. The injuries had been inflicted by a man of unusual strength, and from their position he might have been left-handed. These were all the facts that were then available.

Ward made the usual gambits. Photographs were taken, plans drawn, casts of footprints taken. It may be said at once that the footprints were of no help. Many people had passed in the vicinity.

To fix the identity of the murdered man Ward studied the notebook. There was no address in it, but the names and the amounts suggested a foreign poor Jewish quarter. The address on the paper bag was that of a pastry-cook in Whitechapel. Ward got on the phone to Wensley and asked that Whitechapel should be scoured. "This fellow was a Jew," he said, "and in all likelihood was either a tallyman or owned some small property and collected the rents weekly. Will you see if anyone answering his description is

missing? The names in the book are . . ." He read them out.

By the end of the day this point had been cleared up. The dead man was found to be Leon Beron, a Russian Jew, one of three brothers who had come to London from France some five years before to make claims on an estate of fabulous value. These claims were asserted to have been thwarted by a firm of rascally lawyers. I am sorry to say that this little piece of melodrama proved to be pure balderdash. It was found that Beron had subsisted on the rents of nine tiny houses, which brought him in a total weekly income of a few shillings.

For a moment this, to some extent, destroyed the idea of robbery as a motive. The cherubic-faced detective was confronted with a wider field of speculation. From more than one quarter it was urged upon him that the "S" marks on the face of the murdered man were a symbol of vengeance—that Beron had been concerned in a revolutionary conspiracy and that he had betrayed his associates. "S" would stand for "spic," the Russian word for false spy, or for "spicken," the Polish word for spy. There was also "sorregio," the Camorrist sign. At the mean street in which Beron had lived there was a notorious anarchist club with which he was said to have been associated.

The matter-of-fact Ward and the hard-headed Wensley discussed this theory. They found it hard to stomach. The Special Branch did not know Beron as a revolutionary informant. Beron was not known to have ever been within the doors of the anarchist club. The thing might do as a newspaper story, or

for a writer of fiction, but the unromantic Scotland Yard men were not to be led away on such a wild-goose chase. Ward talked about the matter with me a day or two later, and his most significant comment was a slow wink. It suited him that he should be thought to be hunting revolutionaries.

Without spinning any abstruse theories he approached the case from several angles. There was nothing to show why Leon Beron should have been so many miles from Whitechapel in the early hours of the morning. Whatever his reason, it was highly improbable that he had walked. At that time practically the only means of transit would be by cab. Ward threw the resources of Scotland Yard to inquiries among the cabmen of London, and to facilitate the search he had the body of the dead man propped up and a photograph taken.

Wensley undertook to go through Whitechapel with a fine-tooth comb to find the relatives and associates of the murdered man. The third line of quest was the black and red handkerchief. Ward felt that this had not belonged to Beron, who was not the type of person to carry two handkerchiefs. He, therefore, set men on the colossal task of inquiry at every laundry in London.

This wholesale investigation soon began to bring results. Wensley laid hands on a half-witted brother of the dead man. From him it was learned that Leon Beron, in spite of his meagre income, was carrying at about the time of his death his entire personal wealth—about £20 or £30 in gold and a gold watch and chain worth £30 or more. To the watch-chain had been attached a gold five-pound piece. This information

was confirmed and there was no longer any question that the murdered man had been robbed.

Ward's conclusion that a cab had been used was shown to be right a day or two later. A cabman was found who at two in the morning had picked up two men at Sidney Street, Whitechapel, and driven them to a main road within a few hundred yards of Clapham Common. One of the fares, he remembered, was a very tall man. The other was a little man who resembled the photograph of Beron. Now, cabs are not much used in the East End of London at any time—least of all in the small hours of the morning. It was immense odds that this was the only cab journey taken by anyone from that district during the whole of the night. Ward felt that at last he was on a direct scent. He could reasonably suppose now that—

> The murderer was a tall man of great strength.
> He was probably left-handed.
> He had lived in Whitechapel.
> The motive of the murder had been robbery.

If these assumptions were right, there followed another possibility—that the assassin was a crook who had already been in the hands of the police. Ward and Wensley made a point of looking into the archives of the Criminal Record Office for trace of a tall, left-handed man. They discovered that a young burglar, calling himself Morris Stein, was such a man, and that he had been released from prison on licence the previous year. He was "wanted" for failing to report himself.

A further development was afforded by the striped handkerchief. This was recognised at an East End laundry as one that had been sent from a particular

lodging-house in Newark Street. They had still some articles belonging to the same man which had been brought to them several days before. Wensley sent some of his men to make discreet inquiries. Up to the day before the murder there had been staying there a tall, handsome young fellow whose name was supposed to be Steinie Morrison. Observe how the activities of Scotland Yard men were converging on a common point: Morris Stein—Steinie Morrison—tall, left-handed. Many people were found who had seen Beron and a tall, handsome man together at various times. In particular, there was one woman who had noticed Beron in company with a man who answered the description of Morrison in the Commercial Road, Whitechapel, at two o'clock on the morning of the murder.

For a couple of days unobtrusive watch was kept on the Newark Street lodging-house. There was just a chance that Morrison would return for his laundry.

That, in fact, did happen. Eight days had passed since the murder, and the church bells were ringing—it was a Sunday—when a tall young man swung casually along Newark Street and entered the house. A minute or two later he emerged, and, utterly unconscious that shadows had fastened to him, made his way to a small Jewish restaurant in the neighbourhood and sat down to a late breakfast. A well-built labouring man took a seat at a nearby table. Another labourer was outside talking earnestly into a public telephone. At the other end of the wire was Detective-Inspector Wensley.

So far the case against Morrison was thin, but it has never been the habit of Scotland Yard men to risk losing a person under suspicion until they have accu-

mulated the last shred of evidence. The advantage of holding a suspect simplifies an investigation enormously, for it affords an opportunity of checking up a case from a different angle. Instead of an inquiry running from the crime through a tangle of circumstances in diverse directions, it can be carried straight back from the suspect to the crime in one line. Wensley and Ward, being cautious men, had already resolved not to take any chance of things going awry. It was advisable that until the murder could be brought closer home a pretext for arrest should be found. There was one to hand. Morrison, as a convict on licence who had failed to report monthly to the police, was liable to summary apprehension.

In that very week Wensley had played a part in trapping two alien burglars in a house in Sidney Street, and there had been a fierce fight between them and the police, which only finished when the house in which the robbers had taken refuge was burned down. He knew Morrison for a desperate man, who habitually went armed, and did not propose to allow the suspect any chance of resistance. He took two officers with him and joined the two who were already in touch with the suspect. One of these, as I have said, was seated almost within reach of Morrison.

The other four entered. "I want you, Stein," said Wensley abruptly, and almost before Morrison realised what had happened, he was overpowered and handcuffed. Later events showed how shrewd Wensley's judgment in using an overwhelming force had been.

Morrison did not ask nor did any of the detectives tell him the cause of his arrest. They took him to the police station, and there he defiantly answered a few

STINIE MORRISON.

formal questions that were put to him. These referred mainly to his movements for the previous weeks. He had slept at various addresses, but most of his time had been spent at a house in Lambeth—and Wensley recognised the name of the occupier as that of a notorious receiver. The prisoner was put in a cell and Ward was sent for. In a little while he asked to see Wensley again, and made one of those little slips which even the most adroit murderers seldom avoid.

"You have accused me of murder," he said. "I want to make a statement."

Wensley's face was perfectly impassive. No one had mentioned murder. How should an innocent man have guessed the charge? He nodded. "This is a matter for Inspector Ward," he said. "He will be here presently."

The energetic Ward, a little more scarlet in the face, but otherwise as cherubic as ever, soon confronted Morrison. Again the man reiterated that he had been arrested for murder. He declared that he had been born in Australia and brought up in England. He had been a baker, and was now a traveller in cheap jewellery. The most significant part of his statement was that he had spent ten weeks at a bakery close to Clapham Common. He had left this job some three months before. It was another link in the chain against him, for it showed that he was well acquainted with the district in which the body had been found.

Now that Morrison was under arrest it remained to show that he was the murderer. Ward went to infinite pains to overlook no detail. The first step was to have the prisoner stripped and provided with fresh clothes while his own were subjected to expert scientific

examination. Bloodstains were found on the sleeves of his shirt and on his collar and tie.

Part of that Sunday Ward spent in a meticulous search of the rooms that Morrison had occupied at Lambeth. In the lining of a bowler hat he found an underground railway cloak-room ticket, which had been issued from a Whitechapel station at eleven o'clock on the morning of the murder. It proved to be the voucher for a revolver and a box of cartridges. Although no firearm had been used in the crime, it was significant that Morrison should think it necessary to get rid of this weapon within eight hours of the murder.

The cabman who had driven the two men from Whitechapel to Clapham Common unhesitatingly identified Morrison. Another cabman picked out the prisoner as the man he had taken at some time in the early morning of New Year's Day from the verge of Clapham Common to Kensington. A third cabman was hailed by two men at Kensington at 3.30 in the morning and drove them to North London. One of these he declared was Morrison.

So far the evidence put together by the detectives was fairly reliable. They now fell into difficulties hard to surmount. The rest of their witnesses were drawn from a class of illiterate foreign Jews, some of whom scarcely understood English, some of whom were undoubtedly liars, and of whom few were capable of observing or stating a fact coherently. The stories told by these people had to be sifted and tested. Had their evidence stood alone it is almost certain that Morrison would have escaped.

One thing emerged clearly. Morrison had been

much in the company of Leon Beron in the weeks before the death of the latter. There was a little Jewish restaurant where Beron had taken his meals for several years. On the last day of the Old Year he and Morrison had been together there for many hours. On arrival Morrison had asked a waiter to look after a parcel which he said contained a flute—the waiter told Ward that it "was as heavy as a bar of iron." Just before midnight Morrison took this parcel and left with Beron. There were two or three people who saw the pair in the streets of Whitechapel between one and two in the morning.

Beyond this it was established that a couple of days before Christmas Morrison was so hard up that he had to pawn a watch and chain to raise money. Yet on New Year's Day he bought a gold chain, he gave change for a cheque for £4, and he gave a girl a present of £2. He was seen to have a paper bag with gold and bank-notes. Of where this money had come from he could give no convincing account.

This, in outline, was the case put together by Ward and Wensley. They knew that it had its weak points. They could not guard against the gratuitous lies that were told by the witnesses on both sides. "What is the use of looking at one liar more or less?" asked the Judge ironically, during the trial.

Among many dramatic points of the trial was a fierce attack on Wensley. It was alleged that either he or one of his officers had told Morrison almost immediately after arrest that the charge was one of murder. The implied suggestion was that the prisoner was being "railroaded."

Wensley met the accusation with contemptuous

equanimity, and, although a young police officer was called to substantiate Morrison's story, the authorities preferred to believe the detectives.

A conspiracy of that sort among Scotland Yard detectives was, to say the least, unlikely. Ward, against whom nothing was said, was the man in charge of the case. The credit for it would belong to him. There could be no object for Wensley and his staff to perjure themselves.

Morrison advanced a feeble alibi and was found guilty after a nine-day trial. As the Judge concluded the solemn words of the death sentence, "... and may the Lord have mercy on your soul," he broke into passionate protest. "I decline such mercy. I do not believe there is a God in Heaven either."

The death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. Morrison never ceased to protest his innocence, and became a violent and intractable prisoner. When, during the war, the news reached him that Ward had been killed by an aircraft bomb, he is said to have malignantly asserted that his belief in God was restored. After some years he weakened even his magnificent physique by a series of hunger strikes, and at last died in prison in 1921.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECRET OF THE MOAT

If you can imagine a lean, dyspeptic churchwarden of slow and formal speech you will know how Chief Detective-Inspector David Scott appeared to outsiders. Actually, there was no man fonder of a joke or a good dinner. At the Yard they were always ready to bank on two things—his intuition and his industry. He sensed the vital points in a case at a glance, and he could take short-cuts across a complicated coil of facts to an almost always correct conclusion.

Scott was one of the central detective figures in the mystery of Moat Farm, which is among the most singular murder cases in the history of modern British crime. In this detectives of three distinct organisations worked together to bring to the gallows a cunning rascal who thought he had made himself safe. There was Scotland Yard ; there was the Essex Constabulary ; and there was the City of London Police.

To Scotland Yard there came one March day the Chief Constable of Essex, with Detective-Inspector Marden of his staff. They had a curious story to tell, and they wanted help and advice. Scott, then a young and ambitious sergeant, and Elias Bower, now the head of the detective service of the Port of London, were ordered to co-operate with them.

About four years before, the Moat Farm, some six miles from the village of Clavering, in Essex, had been taken by a couple calling themselves Mr. and Mrs. Dougal. The man was tall and soldierly looking, about

fifty. The woman, a frail, pretty creature, looked about forty, but was, in fact, very much older.

Five months after their arrival Dougal made overtures to a servant maid, which she resented. She spoke to Mrs. Dougal, and slept with her that night. On the following morning Mr. and Mrs. Dougal went for a drive. The lady never returned. Dougal explained that she had gone to London for a holiday.

The servant left, and Dougal continued to live in the place and run the farm. There were little bits of scandal from time to time. It leaked out that the woman was really a Miss Camille Holland, a single lady of some small fortune, and that Dougal had a legitimate wife living in Kent. Divorce proceedings were brought by Dougal, which failed when some particulars of his own love affairs were disclosed.

Some of this talk came to the ears of the police. They heard also that, although Miss Holland had not been seen for years, letters in her name were still accepted at Moat House. A rumour spread that Miss Holland was a prisoner in the place, and Superintendent Pryke, a local officer, called and put the matter bluntly to Dougal. The other laughed, and invited the Superintendent to look around. It was just village gossip, he said. There had been some trouble about a servant. Miss Holland had determined to go away, and he had driven her to the station with her belongings, and had not seen or heard from her since. Pryke had looked around, put a few more questions, and gone away fully convinced that the thing was a mare's nest.

"I shook hands with him as a friend," he said afterwards. "I believed what he told me absolutely."

Since then Marden had discovered that Miss Holland, or someone using her name, was still operating her London bank account.

Scott twitched at his chin. "You suspect murder?" he demanded.

"You've put your finger on it," agreed Marden. "But we've no evidence—not a shred."

"If she is dead the cheques on her bank are forgeries?"

"Exactly." Marden put two fingers in his waistcoat pocket. "I have started working on that line. A year or two back the bank questioned her signature. They received a letter in reply, in which she said that she had hurt her wrist. All cancelled cheques have gone back to Moat Farm except one. I have that here." He displayed a cheque for £28 15s. "We must find someone who can swear that is a forgery."

"That will be the first move," agreed the Scotland Yard man. "Now, tell me, what sort of place is Moat Farm?"

It was a depressing, old, quaint, and comparatively small house that Marden pictured. It stood in its own grounds far from any other habitation, some hundreds of yards from a tiny lane. The house was encircled by a moat several feet deep, crossed by a small bridge. All around the marshy ground was covered with rank vegetation. The farm itself had been neglected, and was not likely to be a paying proposition.

"We shall find the body of Miss Holland there," declared Scott unemotionally. "First, however, we must put Dougal where he will be safe and where he cannot interfere with us."

Observe that at this conference no one doubted that

murder had taken place. These detectives knew the guilty man. They were only concerned to find a body and to show that he was guilty. Dougal's ears must have burned as they talked : as if he had received some telepathic warning that day he disappeared from Moat Farm.

David Scott made his opening moves with the placid and dispassionate concentration of a man playing a quiet game of chess. He cast around until he found a nephew of the missing woman, her nearest relative, who was living in a London suburb. This man had not heard of his aunt for many years, and he knew nothing of Dougal. Unhesitatingly he declared the cheque that was shown him to be a forgery.

Here was a start. A warrant for Dougal's arrest for forgery was obtained, and the hue and cry was raised. The fugitive had two days' start.

Many precautions which are automatic are taken by Scotland Yard in cases of this kind. Its resident detectives at every port are stirred to special glance. Men watch the railway stations. Descriptions and, if possible, photographs are circulated to every police officer in the country. A net is drawn around the kingdom, and if the quarry eludes the hounds at his heels, he is driven to a point at which, so to speak, he is ambushed by those who have waited on events.

From different avenues of investigation information came. Dougal had served for many years in the Army, and shortly after his discharge had been convicted and sentenced for forgery. After his release he had lived by his wits, and there had been many colourful episodes with women.

He had attempted to buy the Moat Farm with Miss Holland's money in his own name, but she had insisted on the ownership being vested in her. Since her disappearance the greater part of her money had been withdrawn from the bank, and by forged signatures Dougal had turned her securities and other property into cash.

Following the direct scent, detectives discovered that, on his flight from Moat Farm, Dougal had been accompanied by a girl. They picked up the trail again at Liverpool Street Station, where the girl had left a couple of trunks from which the name Holland had been partly erased. A watch was set on these trunks, but they were never claimed. It may be said that the girl has no further part in this story. As for Dougal, no one knew whither he had gone.

Scott accepted the situation with unperturbed philosophy. It had been obvious to him and his associates that Dougal must have a bank account of his own. There was little trouble in locating it at the Birkbeck Bank. At about the time of his flight Dougal had withdrawn most of his money in Bank of England notes. The unsmiling Scott gave a sigh of satisfaction when he reported this circumstance to his chief.

"I have got the numbers of most of those notes," he explained. "Sooner or later he will have to change some of them. Then——" He paused significantly.

There was one little irregularity that none of the detectives thought it worth while to worry about. Legally they could not connect these notes directly with the forgeries. They were Dougal's property—in law. They had not the faintest shadow of right to direct the Bank of England to stop them. Yet that's

just what they did. Every successful detective must at times step outside the limits of strict legality.

So they waited. One Wednesday afternoon a tall, well-dressed man entered the Bank of England and asked for change for some £10 notes. At the request of the cashier, he endorsed one of them "Sidney Domville, Upper Terrace, Bournemouth."

The cashier made a signal imperceptible to the stranger on whom he was attending. A man who had been inconspicuously merged among a group of the bank's clients stepped forward and glanced at the endorsed note. Then he took swift, rigid scrutiny of the stranger. Detective-Inspector Harry Cox of the City of London detective force had a good memory for descriptions.

"That is not your name," he said, with deceiving mildness of tone. "You are Samuel Herbert Dougal."

The man started. Recovering himself almost instantly, he was quick to perceive the futility of denial. "Yes," he agreed, "that is my name."

"You are wanted for forgery," went on Cox. "You will have to come with me. Now, if you will promise to behave as a gentleman, I won't put handcuffs on you. We will walk together, and no one will take any notice of us."

"Thank you; I will," agreed Dougal.

The London detectives make it a habit not to humiliate persons whom they arrest if they can avoid it. It is not long ago that Scotland Yard only boasted three pairs of handcuffs in the whole establishment. I doubt, in fact, if Cox had a pair with him at that moment. But he kept his word in letter and spirit, and did not so much as lay a hand on his prisoner.

They walked side by side through the city streets for some distance, without anyone being aware that one of them had just been taken into custody.

As they turned into the Old Jewry, where the headquarters of the City Police is situated, Dougal made a fierce dash for freedom. He hurtled in through the city crowds, Cox close at his heels. For a few hundred yards the chase lasted, and then the prisoner, who was slightly gaining, turned into one of those narrow culs-de-sac with which the city abounds. In a trice the hand of the detective was upon him and he was thrown to the ground by a ju-jitsu hold. Cox pinned him down and held him till assistance came.

At the police station he was searched and £500 in gold and notes were found on him. A wire was sent to Marden, and the next day Dougal was taken to Saffron Walden in Essex, and the solemn farce of pretending to try him for forgery began. He was remanded for eight days, and Scott, Marden, Bower, and other detectives took a first detailed look over the Moat Farm.

Scott organised this search. The inside of the house was systematically ransacked, cupboards turned out, flooring pulled up, walls sounded. They scarcely expected to find a body there. Three significant things, however, were discovered. One was a die by which an exact facsimile of Miss Holland's signature could be impressed on paper. The other was a fine-nibbed pen—"one that it struck me you could write a fine signature with," said Marden. In a kitchen cupboard Scott found a box of thirty-four revolver cartridges. They looked for letters from Miss Holland, but found none.

From the house the detectives turned to the outbuildings. In one of these there was the accumulated rubbish of many years, which was carefully picked over by hand. It looked as if Dougal had only been a clumsy bungler, after all, when someone picked up among this stuff a discoloured human skull. An hour or two later a searcher in the grounds, noting a depression between two trees, began to dig at the spot and same across a collection of bones.

This seemed to end the search. The remains were sent for expert medical inspection, and Scott and others had no doubt of the result. But one of those disappointments which come at times in all criminal investigations befell them. They had been the victims of a dramatic coincidence. The next day the experts declared that the skull was of great antiquity, and the bones those of some animal.

Scott smoothed his white waistcoat with deliberation when he heard this, but his face showed no sign. It was all in the day's work. "If that woman was murdered, we will find her body if we search till Doomsday," he said serenely.

He at once gave directions for a ditch to be dug to drain the moat. There were really two moats, one surrounding about half an acre of house and grounds, the other a smaller one enclosing, perhaps, a quarter of an acre of land, and the two together forming an irregular figure of 8. It took two days for the water to drain away, and at the end of that time Scott and his allies probed fruitlessly with long poles into mud that in some places was four feet deep. They soon perceived the futility of this, and, leaving the moat to dry still further, explored other portions of the

farm, more or less at random. In the islet formed by the smaller moat, bones were again found buried. Again the experts declared the remains to be those of an animal.

All this, of course, could not go on without being discussed by the village gossips and so coming to the newspapers. In a little while all England was aware of the grim quest at Moat Farm. Crowds were attracted from all parts of the country, to be kept at arm's length by the police, and on Easter Monday some agencies went so far as to advertise: "Cheap Trips to the Moat Farm."

Scott made sure that these sightseers were kept well outside his zone of operations, and with studied equanimity went on with the job. As soon as practicable, gangs of men with pickaxes and shovels were put to work on the bed of the moat, and every inch was dug and redug. Scott himself doffed coat and white waistcoat and perspired with the best. Even his dogged spirit was compelled to admit at last that, wherever the body of Miss Holland was, it had not been hidden in the bottom of the moat.

Undeterred by his failure, he divided the whole farm into sections and put gangs to work in what he considered the most likely places. Meanwhile Dougal was being remanded week after week while evidence on the forgery charge was spun out against him.

For six weeks this went on. Scott did not confine himself to directing the search at the farm. He sought out and questioned every person for miles around who had ever had anything to do with Dougal, hoping that some hint, some clue that had been overlooked might develop.

In this fashion he ran across a local character called Old Pilgrim. Over a pint of ale in a wayside hostelry Old Pilgrim discoursed on the various odd jobs he had done for "Muster Dougal." He remembered some carting which he had carried out on the farm about the time that Miss Holland vanished.

Scott pricked up his ears and ordered another pint. "'Twere to fill up a dyke," Old Pilgrim explained. "He were a-doin' away with this 'ere dyke 'cos he were a-goin' to have the farm buildings drained with pipes and all. So I takes the earth there."

The detective got to his feet. "You come with me," he said, "and I'll make it worth your while."

So Old Pilgrim was taken to the farm. He was unable to point out the ditch, however. All that he could do was to point out the place where Dougal had ordered him to shoot the material that was to be used for filling the ditch in. Scott satisfied himself that no modern drainage work had been carried out while Dougal was at the place. He fancied that there might be a more sinister reason for abolishing the ditch, and surveyed the place once more. He found obvious signs that a ditch had once run between the smaller moat and the barns. Digging was immediately commenced.

By this time an impression was gaining ground that the detectives were making fools of themselves. Hundreds of tons of earth had been turned over and two acres of land minutely examined. To carry on over the rest of the farm in this manner would have entailed work likely to last for years. The authorities hinted strongly to Scott that they could not resist the conclusion that money and time were being wasted.

"Give me a few more days," he pleaded.

They gave him four. At the end of two days the line of the old ditch had been excavated without result. Scott threw down his spade in disgust and went afield to get hold of the man who had filled in the ditch. He ran him down in a neighbouring village and brought him to the farm. As a result it was decided to widen and deepen the ditch.

Toward five o'clock in the evening, just before the labourers were about to finish work, one of them gave a hoarse shout. On a tine of the fork he was using was impaled a woman's shoe.

Scott, Bower, and other detectives took over work at the spot where the shoe had been found. In a little while they had disinterred the remains of a woman fully clothed. A very perfunctory examination showed that she had been shot through the head from behind.

They carried the body into a derelict greenhouse, had it photographed, and sent for doctors and people who had known Camille Holland. Meantime Scott resumed a meticulous examination of the ditch, and some hairpins and a tortoise-shell hair ornament were discovered.

The body itself was unrecognisable, but the clothes, the hair ornament, and the boots were identified as belonging to Miss Holland. An eminent pathologist, Professor Pepper, sent down by the Home Office, confirmed the view that the woman had been murdered some years before. From the skull he extracted a bullet that in weight, texture, and manufacture corresponded with the cartridges found by Scott.

Now that the search of Moat Farm was finished, Scott, after his habit, tucked in the loose ends of the case with minute precision. He got Miss Holland's

bootmaker to explain certain peculiarities about her shoes; he discovered a dressmaker who could remember various details of her dress. With an expert gunmaker he carried out a series of experiments to determine the velocity of a bullet fired at close quarters. He demonstrated that Dougal's story of having driven Miss Holland to catch a train to London on the evening of her disappearance was false because there was no train for many hours after she had left the house with him. Every detail wound the net tighter about the accused man.

Against this all that could be urged by one of the most astute counsel at the criminal bar during the trial was a weak suggestion that the body found was not that of Miss Holland. Dougal did not go into the witness-box, and no evidence was called for the defence. The facts were inexorable, and Dougal, whose iron nerve never once failed him during the trial, listened, apparently unmoved, to the death sentence passed by the scarlet-robed Judge.

The execution took place at Chelmsford Gaol at eight o'clock one July morning. I will quote from a newspaper report:

"As the condemned man stood on the trap the silence was broken by the loud voice of the chaplain. 'Dougal,' he cried, 'are you guilty or not guilty?' There was no motion or reply from the man as he stood with the rope around his neck. Again the chaplain put the question: 'Dougal, are you guilty or not guilty?'

"After a moment's pause came the reply in quiet, almost inaudible tones: 'Guilty.' The bolt was drawn."

As a warder affixed an official notice outside the prison that Samuel Herbert Dougal had duly suffered the sentence of the law, a thin-faced figure in a white waistcoat emerged from a side door. He gave one glance at the morbid group of loiterers clustered around the notice-board and moved away. No one recognised the detective who had taken a leading part in the drama just finished.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CARTRIDGE CASE

I DOUBT if there has ever been a mystery in which every method of detection was used so fully and so successfully as the investigation into the murder of Police Constable Gutteridge. Plodding, steady inquiry, brilliant flashes of initiative, acute observation, ready resourcefulness of men as far apart as a Sheffield constable on his beat, the head of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard, and the skilled scientists of the Home Office, the use of Scotland Yard records, and the hint of an informant, all had their part in bringing to justice as wicked a pair of men as ever infested the earth.

It was at six o'clock on the morning of September 27, 1927, that a mail-van driver came across the body of a policeman in uniform lying at the side of a lonely country road near Stapleford Abbots, in Essex. Only one glance was necessary to show that murder had been committed. The dead man had been shot four times through the head. His helmet and his open notebook were lying close by. In his hand was clutched a pencil.

The Essex Constabulary, of which the dead man had been a member, were informed, and with commendable promptitude sought the aid of Scotland Yard. Chief Detective-Inspector Berrett—whose ample beard and moustache make him look as unlike the conception of a modern detective as possible—and his staff were at once placed at their disposal.

To reconstruct in rough outline what had happened was fairly simple. At three o'clock that morning Gutteridge had kept an appointment with another constable at a "conference point" between 600 and 700 yards away. They had separated half an hour later. This fixed the time of the crime within a margin of two and a half hours or less.

The fact that the dead man's torch was still in his pocket showed that some other light had been available at the time when he prepared to make a note. This was in all probability that of a motor-car, and the mark where the side of a tyre had grazed the bank at the side of the roadway confirmed the supposition. The bullet wounds indicated the ferocious determination of the murderers, for of the four shots which had struck the constable, two had been fired at a distance of about six inches. A patient search resulted in two bullets being picked up close by. One was extracted by the doctors from the dead man's head.

For some reason, it was apparent, Gutteridge had stopped a car and questioned its occupants. As he was about to make an entry in his notebook he had been shot down. He was already practically a dead man when someone bending over him had fired those last two shots.

There were really only three possible theories—and two were quickly dismissed as improbable. Gutteridge was a steady, middle-aged man, happily married, and there could be no question of a motive of jealousy. Revenge also was extremely unlikely. Although he had been a police officer for seventeen years and had been considered an excellent type of rural constable, he had been brought into contact only with the petty

offenders of a country district. In fact, there was no one who harboured a grudge against him.

That left the most probable line—that he had chanced to run against desperate motoring criminals, and that he had stopped them ; that he had asked them awkward questions, and become suspicious ; and that they had then adopted this grim method of silencing him.

Berrett lost no time in exploring this avenue. The Crime Index at Scotland Yard was consulted, and within a few hours a list had been compiled of every criminal at large who was marked as dangerous and likely to carry arms. Little groups of detectives were despatched to find each of these, if possible, and to check-up on their movements on the night of the murder. How many hours of work were spent on this job it is impossible to estimate, for it was carried on over weeks and, indeed, months. One by one the possible suspects were eliminated. But there were many men who could not be found. This was not surprising. Few crooks, even though they may be innocent of murder, advertise their whereabouts to the police unless they have to.

Within this meshwork of inquiry there was one of the actual murderers. He was among the half-dozen or so whose whereabouts could not be traced. At this period the police had nothing definite against this man. Like the others who were being sought, he merely *might* have had something to do with the murder.

Several times Berrett and his colleagues thought that they had struck a red-hot trail. There was one ex-convict who had been released after serving fifteen

years for the manslaughter of a police constable in Lancashire. This man was known to be acquainted with the district of the murder, for after his release he had committed an offence at Billericay, a town in the vicinity.

He was roped in the general round-up. At his rooms the detectives discovered a bloodstained bandage and a number of newspapers which gave a full account of the murder. More than that, on the night of September 26-27 he had not slept at home.

They took him to the Yard, where Berrett and others questioned him. He protested his utter innocence, and declared that he had spent that particular night at a certain night club. Officers were at once sent off in a fast car to see if this alibi could be verified. The first step was the club register. Here the man's name was found, and there were officials of the club and others who were prepared to swear that he had been on the premises from ten o'clock on the evening of September 27 till the early hours of the next morning. The alibi was completely watertight. So that promising development fell through.

Not many hours passed before the theory of the detectives that the murderers had been in a motor-car received dramatic confirmation. An hour and a half after the discovery of the crime a clerk living in Foxley Road, Brixton, a south-west suburb of London, observed a Morris-Cowley four-seater car, which had been placed in a cul-de-sac at the back of his house. The radiator was still warm.

He thought little of the incident until his return home at six o'clock the same evening. Finding the car still there, he informed the police. A swift but thorough

examination left no doubt that this was the car which had been used by the assassins. The left-hand front wing was bent, as if it had run against the bank of a roadside. The running-board on the offside of the car, near the driver's seat, bore splashes that were later shown to be blood. More conclusive still, under the driver's seat was found an empty revolver cartridge case, which bore the mark R.L. 4. This corresponded with the calibre of two of the bullets which had killed poor Gutteridge.

Berrett's first move was to have the car identified. Very quickly it was shown that it belonged to Dr. Lovell, of Billericay, and that it had been stolen from the garage of his house at about half-past two on the morning of the crime. When Dr. Lovell had put his car away he had happened to notice the distance shown on the speedometer. Thus it was possible to check the exact distance covered by the car since it had been stolen. It was forty-three miles. The direct route from Billericay to Brixton was twenty-seven miles. This indicated that the murderers had taken devious ways back to town, avoiding the main roads. Why it was easy to guess.

The position in which the car was abandoned indicated that its occupants had a close acquaintance with the locality of Brixton, and had deliberately chosen a spot where the car could be left without attracting immediate attention; this led to a comb-out among car thieves of the district in a wide radius from Brixton, for it was a reasonable supposition that motor thieves had been concerned in the murder.

In another direction the search was widened. Dr. Lovell had left some medical instruments in the motor;

if any of these instruments could be found the persons through whose hands they had passed would have awkward explanations to make.

Leaving for a moment the wide cast being made in every conceivable direction, let us return to Scotland Yard and consider the cartridge case found in the car. Among those who examined it was Sir Wyndham Childs, the Assistant-Commissioner in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, who, before he took charge of the London Detective Force, was a Major-General in the Army, with a long record of active service. His intimacy with firearms at once enabled him to identify the case as that of a revolver cartridge (Mark IV) type, which had been withdrawn from the Army soon after the outbreak of war in 1914, although within the terms of the Hague Convention ; it was used with a flat-topped bullet, and the Germans had held that its use justified them in cutting the tops from the bullets of their own ammunition.

An examination of the photographs of the wounds disclosed distinctive marks showing that one of the bullets was propelled by black powder and the others by cordite. Now, the Army gave up black powder for revolver ammunition as long ago as 1894.

Another point demonstrated after exhaustive experiments with 1,300 weapons by experts was that the marks of the breach shield of a revolver are imprinted on the case of each cartridge fired. The breach shield is the one portion of the Webley pistol which is made by hand. The odds against the file marks of different weapons resembling each other for practical purposes are as great as against individual finger-prints resembling each other.

All these things tended to narrow the circle of investigation in one sense and to widen it in another. No question remained that the murderers were motor thieves of violent tendencies. Could a thief be found in possession of black powder ammunition? Could one be found with medical instruments? Above all, could that Webley pistol, with the betraying characteristics on the breach shield, be discovered? If so, the hunt would be practically at an end.

It was an odd fact that, while these investigations were taking place, all sorts of people who had omitted to register weapons in their possession—mainly war relics—took steps to get rid of them. They were surreptitiously discarded in the river and on waste dumps, and each individual one that was retrieved gave Scotland Yard some trouble in subsequent inquiries. There was, in fact, a Webley pistol and cartridges found in a south-west suburb, which was traced to a man of some reputation, but with a kink that made it possible he might have killed Gutteridge in an unbalanced moment. Luckily his innocence was almost at once demonstrated.

The days grew into weeks and the weeks grew into months. The detectives held pertinaciously on to every line of inquiry. More than 1,000 people were interviewed at various stages, and I believe that the number of statements made and included in Berrett's dossier of the case amounted to four or five hundred. But the murderers still remained at large.

Chance intervened. About two weeks after the murder a man named Mincher was driving a van down Douglas Road, Sheffield, into Bardwell Road. He was passing beneath a narrow railway arch when a

car, driven at something over forty miles an hour, rushed by him. To avoid a collision, Mincher swerved to the left, and his wing was damaged against the wall of the arch. The other car had mounted the footway on the other side of the road, and Mincher demanded the name and address of the driver. This was refused, and the other car drove away. Mincher had noticed a second man seated with the driver, and he also took the number of the car. It was XK2508. He reported the incident to the first constable he met—one James Ward.

A little later that afternoon Ward observed a car numbered XK2508. He stopped it and questioned the driver about the incident with Mincher. As a matter of course he examined the driving licence, which was made out to Sydney Rhodes, 27, York Terrace, Clapham Road, Stockwell, S.W. Ward also closely examined the driver and his companion.

Up to this point there was nothing to show that this was other than one of those commonplace motor accidents which occur by the hundred. A summons was issued against Rhodes and sent as a matter of routine to London to be served. Shortly there came a reply that no such address existed, and that no such person as Sydney Rhodes could be traced. Here Superintendent Plant of the Sheffield Police intervened and sent the number of the car to London and asked that its owner should be traced. Another surprise developed. The number XK2508 belonged to a taxicab which had never been out of London.

Here, then, was a car with a false number, driven by a man with a faked driving licence. These things demanded investigation, although there was then no

suspicion that they had any connection with the Gutteridge murder. Ward was detailed to look for the second man in the car, whom Plant, for reasons of his own, supposed to live in Sheffield. One day Ward spotted his man and took him to Plant. The Superintendent recognised a person he had not seen for twenty years.

This man was induced to disclose the real name of the man with the bogus driving licence. It was Frederick Guy Browne, who was carrying on a garage at Northcote Road, Clapham Junction. Over a series of interviews Plant learned a great deal of Browne and a man named William Henry Kennedy, whom Browne had employed. Among other things he gathered that Browne was deeply concerned in stolen car traffic, and that his visit to Sheffield was to sell a Vauxhall car stolen from Tooting.

At the outset of this Sheffield affair there had seemed no need for pressing the ordinary procedure unduly. Consequently, several months had elapsed before the real significance of the episode became apparent, and Plant put his information at the disposal of Scotland Yard. This was about the middle of January—four months after the murder had been committed.

Browne was on the list of Scotland Yard suspects, for he had only been released from prison some six months before the murder, after serving four years' penal servitude for motor thefts. He had been in the Army during the war, and his intractable temperament had continually got him into trouble. Finally he deserted on a stolen motor-bicycle, for which little exploit he was given ten months' imprisonment. He was

fertile of resource and entirely ruthless in carrying through any purpose to which he devoted himself.

All the while the police were hunting for him he was calmly carrying on his garage and motor-repair business in Northcote Road, one of the main roads of Battersea, and living at a house in Sisters Avenue, a stone's throw from the divisional police station. Sooner or later he must have been questioned. But the news from Sheffield facilitated matters.

It was learned that since his release Browne had carried firearms and that he was a type who would not hesitate to use them in a corner. Other circumstances pointed to him as the murderer. But could it be proved? After four months could he, so to speak, be caught with the goods on him? Anyway, he was wanted for the theft of the Vauxhall car. This afforded a pretext to the detectives for taking a chance.

For two days in the middle of January armed detectives were hidden near the garage in Northcote Road. They waited patiently, for they knew that Browne was given to queer absences from Town. Their plans had been made with infinite secrecy, and he could have no suspicion. Sooner or later he would return.

By a singular and dramatic coincidence, Browne had, in fact, gone to Dartmoor Convict Prison to bring a friend up to London on his release. On the journey to Town he had courteously given a sergeant of police a lift of a few miles into Salisbury. The first place at which he stopped in London was Scotland Yard itself, at which place his companion had to report himself on arrival. Browne drove on to Battersea by himself.

The detectives permitted him to drive his car into the garage yard and to go into his tiny office. Presently he emerged carrying a suitcase. Before he had taken a dozen paces Detective-Inspector Barker and other officers closed round him. The surprise was complete, and he was given no chance to resist. Perhaps it was as well.

Agitated but defiant, he denied the theft of the car when the reason of the arrest was put to him. But his tone changed as Barker searched him. In his pockets were a false driving licence in the name of Harris—"A dud in case I was stopped"—a couple of skeleton key shanks, a pair of forceps, a grey mask, and a dozen revolver cartridges.

"That's done it. Now you've found them it's all up with me," he declared.

Meanwhile another detective had been searching the car. Browne listened gloomily as he recited his discoveries. In the pocket of the door near the driver's seat was a six-chambered revolver fully loaded with flat-topped cartridges marked R.L. 4. Hidden behind the panel of the seat was a fully loaded Webley revolver, and in other places were a bag containing seventeen skeleton keys and a pair of Spencer-Wells forceps, a jemmy, and a flash-lamp. Again Browne remarked that it was all up with him. No one had mentioned the Gutteridge murder.

They led their prisoner into the office while they searched it. He glanced sardonically at the officers. "How many of you were there?" he demanded. "All you lot to pinch me! It was seven last time. It is a good job you didn't collar me when I was in the car, or some of you would have gone west, and me

after you. I have seen a man shoot six down with a gun like that. You can take it from me they didn't get up."

The garage also had its tale to tell. Sixteen cartridges, another pair of forceps, a tube of ethyl-chloride, bandages, a metal case which had contained scalpels, and boric lint were found there. Three officers had been sent off to Browne's rooms in Sisters Avenue, Battersea. There they discovered a heavy calibred Smith and Wesson revolver fully loaded, a number of cartridges, a magnifying lens, and an ear speculum.

They took the prisoner to Tooting Police Station, and there next day Chief Detective-Inspector Berrett invited him to give some explanations. Browne coolly retorted that he was not interested in the Gutteridge murder because it did not affect him. He had done no night riding in Essex. One revolver he had bought from a sailor, and he point-blank refused to explain where he had got the others. The ammunition he had procured from a soldier. He had gone armed because he had been held up when driving about the country.

Browne could explain other things, too. The forceps —he called them pliers—were part of the garage equipment, the bandages he had by him in case of accidents, the ethyl-chloride was for hardening the hands, the speculum he had bought at a street market.

Berrett left it at that for the moment. Browne was charged at the police court with stealing a motor-car and remanded after formal evidence.

There remained the question of his accomplice. A

relentless search was proceeding for "Ginger" Kennedy, who had been employed about the garage till near Christmas. Kennedy also had a crooked record, and the only reason that he had not been on the original list of suspects was that his past exploits had mainly been in the north of England. Trace of him was found at Hugenot Place, Wandsworth, where, on January 14, he and his wife (he had married about this time) had been recommended to lodgings by Browne. The day after Browne's arrest a telegram came to Kennedy. This referred to the illness of a relative in Ireland, and served as an excuse for a hurried departure. A man who had helped them pack a sugar-box with clothes was found. The indiscreet Kennedy had shown him a revolver while buying a drink at a public-house. That sugar-box helped the detectives to find a porter at Euston who had handled it. Its owner had booked to Liverpool—and Liverpool had been one of Kennedy's happy hunting-grounds.

Detective-Inspector Kirschner—one of a family of Scotland Yard men—and Detective-Sergeant Duncan made a dash—I believe by motor-car—to Liverpool, and went into conference with the Liverpool C.I.D. men, who had been notified of the situation by wire. One of the first results of the drag of that city was the discovery of an old acquaintance of Kennedy's who had seen the wanted man the previous December. Kennedy had boasted that he was the manager of a garage in London, and had put forward the queer request that the other should try to get him fifty or a hundred revolver cartridges.

Within a couple of days Kennedy was located. He

had taken lodgings in Copperas Hill under the name of O'Donnell. Towards midnight one evening the house was quietly surrounded by Liverpool and London officers. Some hint of the trap had come to Kennedy, and in his shirt and trousers, his hurried toilet concealed by an overcoat, in which he had slipped an automatic pistol, he tried to steal through the cordon.

Mathieson, a Liverpool detective-sergeant, intercepted him. At his challenge the other wheeled about, pistol in hand. "Stand back, Bill, or I'll shoot you," he warned menacingly. At the same moment there was an ominous click. Let the gallant Mathieson tell his own story.

> I immediately closed with him. I gripped Kennedy's right hand, holding the revolver with my left hand, and twisted his arm in doing it. At the same time I struck him a blow on the right side of his face and neck. This partially knocked him off his balance, turning his back to me. I then grabbed him by the back of the coat collar with my right hand and thrust the point of the revolver into his left side and began pushing him back. . . . I was met by Inspector Kirschner and another officer. As they reached me I held the revolver up in my left hand and shouted: "It's all right. I have got it." I went sick and partially collapsed, but recovered and saw Kennedy and the other officers to the local Bridewell.

Kennedy was frank when he saw his captor at the police station. "I am sorry," he apologised. "I had no grudge against the police, but you should be in heaven now, and there was one for me."

The next day Kennedy was taken to London and brought face to face with Berrett at Scotland Yard. He was told that he would be charged with stealing

a car, and asked if he could give any information about the Gutteridge murder. He pondered for a while. "I may be able to tell you something," he admitted. "Let me consider. Can I see my wife?"

Berrett readily consented. The young wife, tear-stained and agitated, was admitted, and, after they had kissed each other, Kennedy explained.

"You know, my dear, that when I was arrested I told you I thought it was something more serious than stealing a car. These officers are inquiring about that policeman murdered in Essex."

"You didn't murder him, did you?" she exclaimed.

"No, I didn't," he replied, "but I was there and know who did. If I am charged with murder and found guilty I shall be hanged and you will be a widow. On the other hand, if I am charged and found guilty of being an accessory after the fact, I shall receive a long sentence of penal servitude. Will you wait for me?"

"Yes, love, I will wait for you any time," she declared, and to another question added: "Tell these gentlemen the truth."

Then it was that Kennedy told his story—a story which took three and a half hours to tell—and justified practically every supposition upon which the police had worked. In dramatic detail he described how he and Browne had stolen Dr. Lovell's car and were driving at high speed through the country roads when they were stopped by Gutteridge. The constable was questioning Browne about the ownership of the car and his licence when Browne shot him twice. As he lay on the ground, Browne, bending over him, drove two more bullets through his head. Then the car was

THOMAS NEILL CREAM.

restarted, and while Kennedy reloaded the empty chambers of the pistol they made towards London. Kennedy declared that the whole episode had taken him by surprise. "I was absolutely terrified by the way he (Browne) spoke and acted. The man was in absolutely a mad frenzy. It was that which caused me to reload the revolver. I was in such a state of mental agitation that I absolutely did not know what I was doing."

The thought that he might be accused of the crime had, he said, deterred him from giving information to the police.

Legally this statement could only be used against Kennedy himself, but I doubt if all the warnings of counsel and judge could have prevented it having effect against Browne.

There was, however, ample evidence against Browne. Although Dr. Lovell could not positively identify any particular one of the medical appliances, similar things had been in his car. As the Lord Chief Justice subsequently said, the mathematical probabilities were a million to one that they were the articles from the stolen car. The experts showed that the cartridge case found in the car had certainly been fired from Browne's Webley revolver. Cartridges of the both rare types which had killed Gutteridge were found in Browne's possession. Dr. Roche Lynch, the Home Office analyst, declared that the stains on the running-board of Dr. Lovell's car were those of human blood.

There were some queer episodes before the conclusion of the affair. Browne attempted to smuggle a letter in secret ink from prison. He was contemptuously

defiant in court. Kennedy, he suggested, was a dissolute liar whom he had dismissed for drunkenness and who had concocted a lying statement. He held tenaciously to his story that he was at home on the night of the murder and entirely ignorant of the crime.

Kennedy, frankly afraid of the disclosures about his career that might be made in cross-examination by Browne's counsel, did not give evidence. The admission that he had reloaded the revolver after the murder was a damning point against him. It was shown that he had slept at the garage, where weapons were kept. An expert asserted that bullets which killed Gutteridge had been fired from different weapons.

Both men reiterated protests of innocence after they had been found guilty, and both paid tribute to the fairness of the police conduct of the case.

While under sentence of death Browne made an attempt to commit suicide with a safety razor blade which he had managed to conceal. Foiled in this, he refused for a while to leave his bed and carried on a hunger strike.

The appeals of both men were dismissed, and they were ultimately hanged.

Here is a little epilogue from a newspaper cutting :

> Scotland Yard detectives who were engaged in the Gutteridge murder investigation assembled in the Commissioner's room this afternoon, when they were commended by Sir William Horwood on behalf of the Home Secretary.
>
> Among the detectives present were Chief Inspector James Berrett, Detective-Inspector Allom, Detective-Sergeant Harris, Detective-Inspector Charles Leach, Detective-Inspector Barker, Detective-Inspector Sharp,

and other officers from the Brixton Division, Detective-Inspector Kirschner, and Detective-Sergeant Duncan.

But Scotland Yard is not unmindful of the assistance of their Essex, Sheffield, and Liverpool colleagues.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MAD MURDERER

WHEN a murderer steps outside the rules of logic he becomes troublesome to the detective. The whole sequence of cause and effect is destroyed. The average assassin has some reason for every act he takes before and after a crime, and whether those acts are clever or stupid, they do afford some link in the chain of investigation. But a madman may be actuated by no cause ; there may be no motive to connect him with his victims. The detective is faced with illimitable possibilities and no probabilities. Nothing means anything.

I think Sherlock Holmes would have failed to run down Thomas Neill Cream. A single-handed detective must have failed. Scotland Yard did it with the help of a little luck, a great deal of patience, and some astuteness. An odd fact was that the Judge at the trial was first inclined to sneer at the fatuity of Scotland Yard, but afterwards went out of his way to give high commendation to the detectives. Which shows you should never be in a hurry to draw conclusions.

Really there are four and a half detectives concerned in this story. The half detective was a man who had no official connection with Scotland Yard. The others were drawn into the case from different points of the police organisation at various times, and it was when their efforts were welded together by John Tunbridge

that the loose ends were tucked in and a strange series of complications resolved.

Tunbridge was the senior chief detective-inspector at Scotland Yard at this time—a methodical, experienced man who talked little but had shown that he was capable of a brilliant coup from meagre materials on more than one occasion. His merits were fittingly recognised when he was later chosen as Commissioner of the New Zealand Police, in which position he did fine work for many years.

Punctually at nine o'clock most mornings John Tunbridge would take his place on a high stool at Scotland Yard, and, after seeing that his hair still retained its scrupulous parting, settling his tie, and giving a twist to the ends of his well-groomed moustache, settle to work. At times he would present tokens of his gardening skill to a few favoured colleagues.

One October evening a pretty nineteen-year-old girl named Ellen Donworth dropped dying outside a public-house near Waterloo Station. Before she expired she said that a tall, dark, cross-eyed man had given her a drink out of a bottle. A doctor made it clear that she had been poisoned by strychnine, and Harvey, the local detective-inspector, took the matter up.

There was no hint of a motive. Beyond a vague description, there was nothing in the nature of a clue. At the inquest the coroner received a letter in which the writer offered to find the murderer on payment of £300,000. The letter was signed "A. O'Brien, detective."

There was a half-hearted search for "O'Brien," but nothing came of it. On its face, the letter was the

obvious effusion of a crank, and Harvey would have been right ninety-nine times out of a hundred in disregarding it. A few weeks later a well-known politician, Mr. Fred Smith, a member of the great newspaper distributing agency, received a letter signed "H. Bayne," accusing him of the murder. The writer suggested that he would call and see Mr. Smith if he was requested to do so by a paper stuck on one of the office windows. Again a madman was diagnosed, but the police kept watch without result. Some days afterwards a London magistrate received a note in which "Bayne" stated that he had enough evidence to hang Mr. Smith and would make it hot for the police if they did not take action. The case became known as the "South Lambeth Mystery," and the newspapers threshed it to death. After weeks of fruitless work it looked as if it would have to go into the category of unsolved crimes.

Before the inquest on Ellen Donworth had concluded, another girl, named Matilda Clover, living at Lambeth Road in the same district, died in great agony. She complained that a man she called "Fred" had given her some pills, but a doctor certified that death was due to delirium tremens, and for the time the police paid no particular heed to the affair. It was only at a later date that they learned that the then Countess Russell had received an anonymous letter in which her husband was accused of the murder of Clover.

These things had faded from the public mind when, the following April, the guests of the Metropole Hotel were startled by a printed circular headed "Ellen Donworth's Death," stating that the person who

poisoned Ellen Donworth was in the employ of the hotel and that their lives were in danger. This was signed "W. H. Murray."

The next chapter was in Stamford Street, a dreary Lambeth thoroughfare. Lodging in a house that had seen better days were two girls, Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell. Just before two in the morning a police constable saw a man emerge from the house and say good-bye to one of the girls. Within an hour he was called to the place and found both Marsh and Shrivell shrieking with agony. He took them to hospital in a cab, and Marsh died on the way. Shrivell lingered long enough to tell of a dark man whom she knew as Fred, who wore glasses and a silk hat, and who had been with them that night. They had supped on tinned salmon and bottled beer, and Fred had given each of them three pills. It was shown that the girls had died from strychnine poisoning.

Harvey at once leapt to the conclusion that there was some connection between these murders and that of Ellen Donworth. One of his men, Detective-Sergeant Alfred Ward, who must not be confused with that Chief Detective-Inspector Alfred Ward who was later killed by a Zeppelin bomb, heard how Matilda Clover had died. Although her death had been certified as natural, the circumstances struck the inspector as curiously like those of the other murders. Harvey determined to have her body exhumed and examined by experts. The guess was right. She also had been poisoned by strychnine.

Here it was that Chief Inspector Tunbridge was instructed to assume control of the investigation. All that he knew was that somewhere in London there was

a dangerous murderer with a squint who called himself Fred. His first step was a wholesale network of inquiry among girls of a certain class in London. He felt that his chief chance of a clue lay among them.

Let me now introduce two more men. One was John Haynes, an engineer with ambitions as a detective; the other was Detective-Sergeant M'Intyre, a bright young Scotsman who was attached to the Special Branch at Scotland Yard. Both of these came into the business by pure chance. A Special Branch man usually has nothing to do with ordinary criminal investigation. It is his duty to guard royalties and statesmen and to keep an eye lifting on political offenders. At the moment M'Intyre was more interested in a few Irishmen who were anxious to blow up the British Empire than in unknown poisoners.

Haynes had done a little political spying for the Government. That may explain why he was in touch with M'Intyre. He lodged with a photographer in the Westminster Bridge Road, who was also an acquaintance of the Special Branch man. To this gentleman's studio there came frequently a Dr. Neill, who had a passion for posing in front of a camera. The photographer introduced him to his lodger, and the two began to spend much time together.

Dr. Neill did not practice. He had taken British degrees, but had spent much time in America. He was now, by his own account, acting as agent in England for an American drug company. He was fond of seeing life and was a genial companion. About the middle of May the photographer, Haynes, and the doctor were spending a convivial evening about town when the photographer noticed that they were

being shadowed. Haynes demanded an explanation from Neill. The doctor was perfectly ready with a story.

A fellow-lodger with him at his boarding-house had been a young medical student named Harper, who was in receipt of an ample allowance from his wealthy doctor father at Barnstaple. Harper Neill pictured as an unscrupulous Don Juan who had been concerned in the Stamford Street poisoning affair. He had been blackmailed by Marsh and Shrivell and had consulted Neill about buying strychnine. The doctor declared that he had thereupon written an anonymous letter of warning to the girls. Harper had disappeared shortly before the inquest. Neill mentioned the names of Clover, Donworth, and another girl named Lou Harvey as having been poisoned by Harper. When Haynes asked why he had not informed the police, he retorted that he was not a fool. There was some money to be made out of young Harper's father by one who could play the cards properly.

He finished his recital by asking Haynes to look into the matter.

Haynes seems to have kept his own counsel and set out to win his spurs as a detective. He had no suspicion of the frank and confidential Neill at that time.

It just happened that M'Intyre was in casual talk with the photographer one day when Neill came up and was introduced. Even detectives must do something with their spare time, and M'Intyre found Neill an agreeable companion with whom to spend an occasional hour.

Their intimacy progressed, and the doctor at last spoke to the detective of being annoyed by shadowers

whom he believed to be police officers. Till that instant M'Intyre had had no shadow of distrust of his new friend. Although there was no apparent change in his demeanour, he at once found his mental attitude stiffen. He amiably assented to Neill's suggestion that he should see the local detectives.

He strolled round and had a chat with Detective-Inspector Harvey. Thus he learned of suspicions that were focussing on Neill. The latter had made no mistake. He was indeed under surveillance by Ward.

That keen-scented detective-sergeant had, a couple of days before, noticed Neill in the Westminster Bridge Road, and had remarked a resemblance to Constable Cumley's description of the man who had emerged from the house in Stamford Street. He held the other in sight and sent for Cumley. The policeman changed hastily to plain clothes and, with precautions, was afforded a glimpse of the suspect. He declared him of the same build and general appearance as the man of Stamford Street. Since then Ward had been dogging the doctor's footsteps.

Swift advantage was taken of the situation by the detectives. It was arranged that Neill should be introduced to Harvey by M'Intyre. A little comedy was staged at a local public-house. Neill gathered that the bother had arisen because he was a stranger in the locality. If he could prove his business and his identity, there was little doubt that it would cease.

Neill willingly fetched a sample case and some letters to show that he was acting as an agent for an American drug firm. Harvey professed himself satisfied and left. M'Intyre and the doctor stayed for a while, and Neill, for the first time, made reference to

the Stamford Street poisoning cases. It was impossible, he suggested, that the police could seriously believe he had had any hand in them.

No police officer had, in fact, mentioned them, but the detective did not point this out. He managed to suggest a pose of subtle sympathy while Neill took up the attitude of a citizen righteously indignant at officious police attentions.

All the same, the shadowing continued. Neill instructed his lawyers to write a letter of complaint to Scotland Yard.

Tunbridge, to whom the matter came, had his own views. There was no evidence as yet to justify an arrest, but he was not to be diverted. Ward was ordered to hang on to Neill. M'Intyre, relieved from all other duties, was to continue to cultivate the doctor. Detective-Inspector Jarvis was sent to the United States and Canada to look up Neill's antecedents. Other detectives were assiduously seeking out every one of Neill's acquaintances from whom the slightest scrap of information might be gleaned.

Ward saw Neill with women at times, and you may be sure that he learned what the doctor had to say to them. One girl at least had a narrow escape when she refused an American drink that Neill mixed for her.

M'Intyre pumped Haynes and stuck close to Neill, whom he encouraged to talk. Towards the end of May the latter complained that he had been pestered by a detective named Murray, who had questioned him about Harper. There was, in fact, no detective of that name engaged on the case. Finally, he produced a letter addressed to Marsh and Shrivell, which had

passed through the mail, and which warned the girls to be careful of Harper or he would serve them as he had served Matilda Clover and Lou Harvey. M'Intyre had never heard of Harvey before.

Young Harper was found, and, though he had no recollection of Neill, he was easily able to show that the statements made against him were a tissue of inventions. Meanwhile his father, Dr. Harper, sen., had received a letter accusing his son of the murder of Marsh and Shrivell and demanding £1,500 as the price of silence. The writer signed himself "W. H. Murray," and asked that negotiations should be opened through the advertisement columns of a daily paper.

Tunbridge saw Dr. Harper and took possession of this letter. He angled with a cunningly worded advertisement without result.

By this time quite a number of letters of this type were in his hands. These were in two or three different handwritings. Among them was one of high significance which had not been brought to the attention of the Chief Detective-Inspector before; indeed, it had been dealt with by a different officer before Tunbridge had assumed charge of the investigation.

This had been sent to Dr. Broadbent, an eminent surgeon, towards the end of the previous November, and accused him of murdering Matilda Clover by strychnine. The writer, who signed himself "M. Malone," demanded £2,500 to suppress his knowledge. In this case also a newspaper was indicated as a means of negotiation.

Tunbridge at once saw the point of the letter. At that time *no one but the murderer* could have known

that Matilda Clover died from poison. The letter, when it originally came to Scotland Yard, had been handled by a group of detectives to whom Matilda Clover's name conveyed nothing. They had regarded it as a crude blackmailing letter of a common type, and had done nothing beyond attempt to entrap the writer. This was the laxity which the Judge criticised at the trial. He apologised when it was made clear to him that if every detail of similar letters was followed up the Criminal Investigation Department would need, not 900, but 9,000 men. Neither Tunbridge nor those associated with him had talked of the developments which led to her body being exhumed. As a result, the letter came to them at a late stage in the case.

M'Intyre was deputed to tackle Neill on the subject. He made a friendly call at the doctor's rooms, and the talk turned on the poisoning murders. "You seem to be well posted in these cases, doctor," he remarked.

"A matter of professional interest," observed Neill complacently. In a few minutes he was once more denouncing the pertinacity of "Murray the detective."

M'Intyre lifted a sheet of notepaper which was lying on the table. "Just jot down the facts about the way you have been bothered," he said. Neill scribbled a few lines in his neat handwriting, and the detective put the sheet of paper in his pocket. He also suggested that to avoid any further "persecution" Neill should make a general record of his doings and movements since he had been in England. Neill promised to do this the following day, and M'Intyre took his leave.

In a room at Scotland Yard he and Tunbridge and

Harvey compared Neill's writing with that on the various anonymous letters. It corresponded with some of them. But Tunbridge clinched the matter beyond doubt. He held to the light the note given to M'Intyre and the letter sent to Dr. Harper. Both bore the same watermark—"Fairfield, Superfine Quality." A little inquiry among experts showed that it was a paper manufactured in the United States and not on sale in England.

The net was slowly closing, but Tunbridge still held his hand. An extensive search was made for Lou Harvey. No trace of her, dead or alive, could be found for some time. She was at last located at Brighton, and told of one or two meetings with Neill. On one occasion he had given her capsules, which she pretended to swallow, but really threw away. It was obvious how he had come to suppose that she was among his victims.

M'Intyre duly turned up for the promised statement from the doctor. He found him in bed dictating to Miss Sleaper, his landlady's daughter. A glance showed the detective that there was no reference to the day on which Shrivell and Marsh were murdered. He pointed this out. "Oh," said Neill easily, "as soon as I get up I will look up the dates. I think I was at Berkhamstead.

The hint was enough. Detectives descended on Berkhamstead, and a girl was found who for some months had been engaged to Neill. She it was who, quite innocently, at his dictation had written some of the anonymous letters signed "Murray." Some inquiries were also made of Miss Sleaper. She remembered one or two queer things. Neill had once asked her to take

a letter to an address in the Lambeth Road, about, as he said, a young woman who had been poisoned by Lord Russell. He had discussed the Stamford Street poisoning cases with her and had mentioned Mr. Harper as the culprit.

Tunbridge himself dropped in on Neill one day, ostensibly in regard to the complaints of police interference. The doctor held to his story that he was agent for an American drug company, and showed the inspector a medicine case. Tunbridge observed some strychnine pills. He remarked that it would be highly dangerous if they fell into the hands of the public. Said Neill: "It is not intended to sell them to the public direct, but only to druggists and doctors."

The Scotland Yard machine was in full activity at this time, but it was still thought inadvisable to take action. Suddenly Tunbridge's hand was forced. M'Intyre reported that Neill was getting restive and talking of going away. On the hint Tunbridge promptly made his way to Neill's rooms, and told the doctor he was under arrest for blackmailing Dr. Harper. He made no mention of murder. "Fire away," said the unruffled Neill. "You have got the wrong man."

The detective lifted his shoulders in a shrug that might have meant anything, and began an efficient search. There was an envelope in a drawer on which Neill had written the initials of all the murdered girls and the dates of their deaths. In one of his pockets was a piece of paper in the handwriting of Marsh, with her address. An odd discovery was a birth certificate showing that the doctor's real name was Thomas Neill Cream.

Now that Neill was under arrest there were many conferences between the Scotland Yard men and the Public Prosecutor. Whatever moral certainty there was, there was precious little legal proof to connect Neill with the murders. It may be said that, right up to the last moment, there were grave doubts of a conviction. It was resolved to concentrate on the case of Matilda Clover and to put in the case of Shrivell and Marsh if that failed. The chief evidence directly connecting Neill with the death of Clover was the letter to Dr. Broadbent. That showed a knowledge of the crime, which might go far to convince a jury that it had been written by the murderer himself. Tunbridge traced out two girls who had been acquainted with both Neill and Clover. Both of them had seen Neill accompany her to her lodgings on one occasion. On the night that Clover died she had returned home with a man, and they were let in by a girl. The description this girl gave corresponded with that of Neill, but she was unable to identify him.

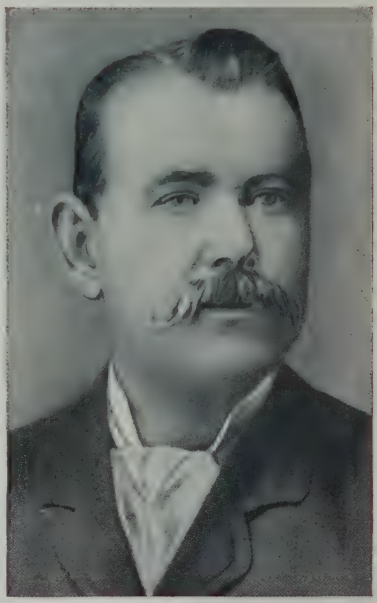
This was all the direct evidence that could be produced, and the detectives and the lawyers knew how flimsy it was. But, as I have shown, the Yard knew more than they might say, and they determined that a strenuous attempt should be made to put an end to the career of Dr. Neill Cream.

The efforts of Jarvis in the United States and in Canada had filled in the gaps of the life story of this sinister man. He was born in Scotland, but at an early age had been taken to Canada by his parents. He had graduated in medicine at M'Gill University. When he was twenty-four he insured his personal effects for a thousand dollars, and had a little fire. Two years

INSPECTOR JOHN TUNBRIDGE.

DETECTIVE-SERGEANT MCINTYRE.

DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR HARVEY.



DETECTIVE-SERGEANT WARD.

later he attempted to repeat the trick, but the insurance company was suspicious, and ultimately there was a compromise for a small sum. About the same time he met a Miss Brooks in Montreal and became engaged to her. Another doctor discovered that she was suffering from the effects of a noxious drug, and it was as a result of this that her father sought Cream out and compelled marriage at the point of a pistol. Immediately after the ceremony Neill Cream left, as he said, to complete his medical education in England.

He did, in fact, take a post-graduate course at St. Thomas's Hospital, in London, and gained his British medical degrees. Meanwhile his wife had died, and he went back to Canada and started practice at London, Ontario. A short while after a chambermaid, named Kate Gardener, was found dead in a room adjoining his premises, a bottle of chloroform by her side. All the facts pointed to murder, and the doctor tried to implicate a well-known merchant, who, however, was able to show evidence of an attempt at blackmail. There was no proof against Cream, but suspicion was so strong that his practice was ruined and he migrated to Chicago.

In this city Jarvis was able to pick up some illuminating episodes in Neill Cream's history. The first was the arrest of Cream for causing the death of a woman named Faulkner by an illegal operation. He was discharged for lack of evidence. Four months later a girl named Miss Stack died after taking medicine prescribed by Cream, and he sent blackmailing letters to the chemist who had supplied the prescription. Legal steps were taken, but before they

became effective Cream was arrested at the instance of another man for sending scurrilous postal cards. He was let out on bail, and the Chicago detectives became interested in him on account of another matter.

Julia Stott, the pretty young wife of an elderly and epileptic station agent who lived some miles from Chicago, visited Cream to supply her with a cure for epilepsy. She became the doctor's mistress and paid him frequent visits on the pretext of obtaining fresh supplies of the medicine. After a few months Cream tried to insure Stott's life but did not succeed. There came a June day when Cream gave Mrs. Stott a prescription for her husband which she had made up at a drug store. She went back to the surgery, and there Cream dropped some white powder into the medicine. Within twenty minutes of taking it her husband was dead. That same night, before the news of the death was known, Cream told an acquaintance that Stott had been poisoned.

The death was at first believed to be due to an epileptic seizure, but Cream could not let well alone. He wrote to the coroner declaring that the chemists had blundered in making up the prescription. When the coroner ignored this letter he wrote to the District Attorney, who had the body exhumed. It was found that Stott had died from strychnine poisoning. Cream, who had "jumped his bail," was traced to Canada and arrested. He and Mrs. Stott were charged with murder. The woman was acquitted, and Cream, found guilty of murder in the second degree, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Within ten years he was released—an act of

clemency that was to cost at least four women their lives. Within four months he was in England and had poisoned Ellen Donworth and Matilda Clover.

After a five-days' trial at the Old Bailey Cream was convicted. He was, of course, hanged.

CHAPTER XX

THE MAN WHO HANGED HIMSELF

THERE is an engaging and deluding air of simplicity about "Billy" Gough. There are so many things that he professes to know nothing about. You might talk with him for hours and set any man down as a liar who told you that Gough had been one of the most formidable detectives of Bow Street and Scotland Yard. Put him down in a strange place and the confidence men would line up with shame in their minds at taking advantage of his artlessness. It is not a pose either. He knows there are crooks in the world because he has spent his life fighting them, but he prefers to believe that the majority of the world is honest.

I remember that he once asked me with grave innocence what a "sucker" was. And give him a chance and a quiet hour and you will hear—not stories of mystery and crime, but tales of a wonderful wife whom he married just as he was starting his career, and who he thinks is still more wonderful at this day.

This is the man who arrested the shrewdest crook lawyer in London, the man who played a big part in running down that gang of swindlers who used Goudie, a Bank of Liverpool clerk, as a dupe. This young fellow stole £100,000 from the bank by forgery and lost it all by betting on "dead 'uns" carefully selected for him by the gang. All he got for years of penal servitude was a nice box of cigars.

I think that in his early days Billy Gough must have owed much success to that deceptive manner of his. The "heads" under-estimated him. The old hands stopped that long ago. Although Billy Gough has left Scotland Yard, memories of him are still fresh. Curiously enough, of the hundreds he has arrested, I do not believe there is one who harbours a grudge against him. Certainly he had a friendly feeling towards some of them which did not in the least prevent him from sending them to gaol on occasion with promptitude and despatch. But he did it like a gentleman. He was always prepared to do some little favour —it might be the gift of a cigar to a prisoner on his way to penal servitude, it might be a sympathetic visit to a convicted crook's family to give a message. To more than one man on his release from prison he has extended a hand that made all the difference.

Billy Gough must be getting on for sixty now. He is still as straight as a lance, and has the face and physique of a man of forty. And beneath that mask of natural urbanity there still lurks that habit of thinking in a straight line which served him so well when he was a divisional inspector at Bow Street, and later a chief detective-inspector at Scotland Yard. It was this habit that enabled him to run down the murderer of Captain Tighe when all apparent clues had burst like bubbles at the first touch.

Captain Tighe was an elderly army officer who lived in a big house—Winkfield Lodge—overlooking one of the finest open spaces on the fringe of London. The old captain was troubled with asthma, and for that reason he slept in a remote room of the house so

that his fits of coughing should not disturb his wife or the other occupants. On a November morning in 1917 a maid with an early cup of tea knocked at his door. There was no answer, but that was not unusual. She quietly pushed open the door with the intention of pulling up the blinds. At her first glimpse inside the room the cup crashed from her hands. Her master, fully dressed, was lying unconscious and dying on the floor, his head in a pool of blood.

The girl raised the alarm. Medical help and the police were telephoned for, but the Captain was too desperately hurt for any efforts to avail. He died without recovering consciousness. There was no need to look far for the rough details of the crime. A heavy poker stained with blood and bent with the terrific force of the blows was found in the bedroom. Tighe had been sitting in a chair by his fire when he had been attacked from behind with this implement. The method of the murder was plain. The motive was not so obvious.

The local detectives were puzzled. There was no one known to have any grudge against Tighe, no person against whom suspicion could be levelled who would derive any benefit from his death. That left the theory of burglars. This was supported by the discovery of heel-marks on the garden outside the study window, which was partly open. There was a finger-print on one of the panes, but the experts found it too blurred to be of any value. Plaster casts were taken of the heel-marks, although the most cursory inspection made it obvious that not one of them was clean-cut enough to be of any use for purpose of identity. Nor could the detectives feel certain that the

murder was the work of burglars. There were few of the ordinary signs of robbery about the house. Nothing of value was missing. Only after a great deal of trouble was it revealed that two gun-metal watches belonging to the dead man had gone, as had a raincoat belonging to one of the servants. This was not heavy spoil to take from the house of a well-to-do man as the price of murder. It was noted as a significant fact that the servants' entrance to Winkfield Lodge had not, by some mischance, been locked or bolted on the night of the murder.

A week of hard but fruitless investigation went by before Gough was sent down from Scotland Yard. I gather from what he later told me that a preliminary survey of the situation did not make him optimistic. The ordinary professional burglar—in England at all events—keeps away from murder. The crime, if it had been committed by some amateur marauder—perhaps a tramp who had noticed an unfastened door—presented almost insuperable difficulties. It left the possibilities so wide that the chances against tracing the murderer were immense. Even greater were the difficulties against collecting proof that would be likely to satisfy a jury. By a paradox it is often harder to solve the mystery of a clumsy murder than a clever one. It is easier to diagnose the processes of mind of a clever murderer.

The finger-print and the heel-marks having failed, Gough turned to the poker. He learned that it had been taken from the dining-room grate. Apparently the robber had picked it up and carried it as a weapon while he prowled about the house. Gough, from his extensive experience, knew that most criminals form

habits and set inquiries afoot to discover if there was any recent case in which a burglar was known to have carried a household poker as a weapon. A little to his surprise he was almost immediately informed of one.

A few weeks before a burglar had broken into a house a few hundred yards distant from Winkfield Lodge. Before he had time to get to work the maroons and sirens woke the neighbourhood as German aeroplanes drew near to London, and the robber, in a panic lest he should be discovered by the household, hastily took his departure. At the tradesmen's gate he left a poker, which he had taken from the dining-room. This entrance had been left unfastened.

The coincidence was too striking to be ignored. Coincidences are a vital asset to a detective. Although still without a hint as to who the man might be, Gough began to feel that he had struck the glimmer of a trail. Still, there was a long way to go.

Everyone nowadays has heard about the finger-print system. There is a large body of people, however, who would be at a loss to explain a later development of police method, although its essential principles go back to the days of the Bow Street runners. The "M.O." system—short for "modus operandi"—depends on the fact that most people—particularly habitual criminals—are creatures of habit. There is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred some peculiarity of method about a man who repeats crime that will give him away as the author of a previous effort. The old detectives knew this and could often indicate a criminal by a mere glance at the crime. An extreme instance was the case of a man who would rob nothing

but church offertory boxes. Each burglar, each forger, each hotel thief, has some mannerism or series of mannerisms in his work by which he is liable to be betrayed. On this point of psychology Scotland Yard has based the "M.O." system.

Thus, the Criminal Record Office at Scotland Yard has a department, officially called the "Crime Index," which is worked as a clearing house in conjunction with all the police forces of Great Britain. This is entirely devoted to a tabulation of the manner in which crimes are committed. It was to this department that Gough now turned.

There was no record of any recent case in which a poker had served as a weapon for a burglar, but there was some account of a series of trifling burglaries in the Streatham district in which the robber had entered and escaped by means of an unfastened servants' entrance. The coincidence was very tiny—but Gough was looking for any kind of a coincidence. To the ordinary man it might have seemed a wild and improbable hypothesis to build upon. All the same, Gough felt that it might be worth his while to probe a little closer.

There was only one clue to the identity of the Streatham burglar. It had come to the ears of Scotland Yard that he had managed to sell some few articles of stolen jewellery to a working jeweller in Wardour Street, Soho. This man had purchased them quite innocently—they were quite commonplace goods of no special value—and it was only when the daily list of stolen property which is issued by the London police reached him that he reported the facts. He gave a description of his client, which was

not particularly helpful, but declared that he would be able to recognise him again.

Gough pored over this description. His knowledge of London crooks was extensive and peculiar, but this corresponded to no one that he remembered. He sought an interview with the jeweller and questioned him closely. There was nothing fresh to be learned. Nor did the exhibition of a number of photographs of some of the protégés of the Yard help. The only thing that was certain was that someone had sold stolen property. Whether the man was the murderer Gough sought or not he was unquestionably a breaker of the law. The Chief Detective-Inspector gave the jeweller his card.

"There may be something more serious in this than a mere question of burglary," he said. "I want you to help me. If this fellow should come to see you again, hand him over to the nearest policeman. Don't make any mistake about it. If the constable should hesitate to arrest him give him my card and say you are acting on my instructions."

This was a simple matter of precaution. In fact, Gough scarcely expected the man to come back, especially if by any chance he was responsible for the murder. The thing was, however, a remote contingency, and Billy Gough was not the man to overlook possibilities even if they were remote. In this instance a very long shot came off.

The wanted man did not come back. But a day or two later the jeweller, passing along Wardour Street, paused with casual professional interest to inspect the display in the window of a trade rival. His eye wandered to the interior of the shop and he at once be-

came alertly interested. For there he beheld in consultation with the proprietor no less a person than the young gentleman Gough had urged him to detain at any cost.

He slipped quietly into the shop and managed to get the proprietor aside without attracting the notice of the suspect to himself. Strangely enough, the other jeweller was reluctant to take any action. He may have thought the thing a mare's nest, he may have felt some diffidence in being mixed up in legal proceedings, or it may have been that he thought his brother jeweller unnecessarily officious. Whatever reason was in his mind he bluntly refused to do anything.

The other was in a quandary. To go away to call an officer would be to afford the suspect a chance of escape. So he waited outside the shop, and when his man at last emerged he followed closely in his wake, keeping an eye open for a policeman. Now, in the West End of London policemen are usually as thick as the proverbial leaves in Vallombrosa. By a perverse freak of Providence, none were to be met with that day until they reached Piccadilly Circus.

With Gough's card in his hand, the jeweller gave a hasty explanation to one of the men on traffic duty. The policeman wasted no time. Leaving the tangle of cars and buses to sort itself out, he crossed the road and laid a heavy hand on the shoulder of the suspect.

"Half a moment, my lad," he said. "I want you to come to the station with me."

The other tried to wrest himself free. "What for?" he demanded aggrievedly.

"You'll know all about it in time," retorted the

constable, locking a hand about the prisoner's wrist. "Come along."

Gough's card and the story of the jeweller afforded the police in Vine Street ample justification for holding the man on suspicion of being concerned in the Streatham burglaries. He gave his name as Gray, and at first refused any account of himself. A phone call to Scotland Yard brought Gough in a hurry to Vine Street, and he had a talk with the prisoner, who had no idea at the time that the tall, ingenuous Chief Inspector suspected him of murder. But he was incautious enough to give his address—it was a single room rented at a few shillings a week—and that place Gough soon examined thoroughly and scientifically. The search had not proceeded far before Gough became satisfied that his long shot had come pretty close to the middle of the target. Under the bed was a tin trunk, among its contents being a pair of khaki trousers. In one of the pockets was found a gunmetal watch bearing on the dial the name "Angelus." It was one of those which had been stolen from Winkfield Lodge. Further search revealed another oxidised watch and the stolen raincoat.

All this was good. If Gough had been a detective out of a book, he would have finished here. Being an experienced police officer, he knew that much more was necessary. The possession of these stolen articles alone would not be sufficient to bring about a conviction. Somehow the crime had to be brought still closer home. No living soul had seen the murderer at or about the time the murder was committed, so that there was no hope of bringing evidence to show that he had been in the vicinity of Winkfield Lodge at the

time. Gray was asked to give a recital of his movements on that night, but he was not to be drawn. He kept his mouth tightly shut. As anything in the nature of third-degree questioning is jealously prohibited in England, Gough let him alone for the time and concentrated on finding out something of his antecedents. Meanwhile he burnt his boats and had the prisoner charged with murder.

The history of a man once in custody can seldom remain a mystery long. With the machinery of Scotland Yard at his disposal, Gough found it simple to discover the leading facts of the accused man's career. He was of French birth and had been brought to England when he was three years old. His real name was Victor de Stamir. From childhood he had been an unregenerate rascal. He was still a schoolboy under fourteen when he was first charged with theft. He got away with that, but a year later he embarked on a burglary and was sent to a reformatory for three years. On his release his people gave him opportunity after opportunity to run straight. He was a congenital rogue, however, and he soon tired of the monotony of honesty. Since he could not escape the vigilance of his parents while he remained at home, he determined to run away. For some years trace of him was lost. Then news reached his home that he had been sentenced to a term of penal servitude for certain nefarious operations in Australia.

Ultimately he came back to England in an attempt to re-enact the rôle of the prodigal son. His father, however, was disinclined to kill the fatted calf. Young de Stamir was given to understand that he could expect nothing more from his family.

War had broken out by this time, and, in common with hundreds of thousands of other young fellows, de Stamir was roped into the British Army. As military slang has it, he proved one of the King's bad bargains. The discipline of a soldier's life irked him, and he found the rough-and-ready manner in which some of his habits were corrected painful. So when an opportunity came he quietly resorted to civilian clothes and burglarious employment. His name was posted as that of a deserter in the *Police Gazette*.

He engaged a room in the name of Gray, and with consummate impudence told his landlady that he was on the staff of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Army Police. Thus he avoided awkward questions as to his absence from the fighting forces and provided himself with a first-class excuse for strange comings and goings at all hours. For the time he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He fancied himself as a lady-killer, and there were certain girls to whom he was a hero. There was also another girl of a different type—an innocent young woman of good family whom he imposed upon sufficiently to gain her consent to their engagement.

Gough was familiar enough with men of the type of de Stamir—criminals who are not far removed from petty sneak-thieves, and whose practice is to pick up what they can at likely-looking and unguarded suburban houses. The status of de Stamir was shown by the fact that he did not even know of a proper "fence" with whom to dispose of his loot. The detective was not surprised to pick up the trail of a series of burglaries of this small sort which could fairly be attributed to the prisoner. Indeed, in the fortnight which had

elapsed between the murder and his capture he had had the impudence or the folly to take part in five fresh robberies.

If it had been a mere question of proving the man a thief, the thing would have been easy. But though a man is a mean little crook, he may still be innocent of murder. As I have said, the articles discovered in de Stamir's room would not alone suffice to convict him. Gough had one card left to play. There were plenty of indications of the sort of man de Stamir was. He was supremely vain of his own cleverness—a kind of Sentimental Tommy of crime. The detective resolved to play on his vanity. He formed a subtle plan which has been used both consciously and unconsciously by detectives before.

He ordered that an attitude of extreme indifference should be adopted by those who came in contact with the prisoner. Periodically de Stamir was escorted from Brixton Prison to Wimbledon for the preliminary police court proceedings. His escort was picked and given instructions. Then de Stamir was tickled to find that, instead of being conveyed to and fro in the ordinary "Black Maria," he was treated to the luxury of a cab. Thus he was put on *tête-à-tête* terms with his escort. A man of de Stamir's temperament who has been in a lonely cell for a period is, in such circumstances, disposed to conversation.

All de Stamir's efforts in this direction, however, were met with a grunt and a yawn. This detached attitude was more than the other could stand. Here he was accused of a serious murder, and no one seemed to get excited about him. He began to talk of the proceedings.

"Of course I was there," he declared. "But I didn't hit the old man. The chap who was with me did that."

The police officer languidly shrugged his shoulders. "Better not talk about it," he warned. "If you say anything, I may have to use it as evidence."

The other sat up. "I didn't murder him," he declared. "If you want to know, I'll tell you."

"Just as you say," agreed his companion, bored beyond endurance. "Only if I were you I'd wait till we get back to the prison and then write it down."

Now, all of this was strictly legal and correct. No one might question de Stamir. But he was entirely entitled to volunteer information even if it hanged him—as it did.

Gough was informed of the success of his ruse, and at the prison he sat while de Stamir concocted and wrote a story which he imagined would enable him to evade the consequences of the major charge. The effect of this statement was that he and another deserter had planned the burglary at Winkfield Lodge, but that it was the other man who had picked up the poker and committed the murder.

So out of his own mouth it was shown that he was present at the commission of the crime. Now, he was a little bit hazy on his law. Even if an accomplice had killed the old man, de Stamir was equally guilty of murder in a legal sense. But Gough, of course, took steps to test the statement. It crumbled to bits at once. There was no other man. The murder had been the work of one person.

It was, as the lawyers say, an open and shut case which came for trial at the Old Bailey. The prisoner

went into the witness-box and made a pitiable exhibition when cross-examined on the material Gough had supplied. The jury did not even retire to consider a verdict, and de Stamir was found guilty. He was hanged in February, 1918.

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